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THE CHRISTIAN MOURNING WITH HOPE.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT BEVERLY, NOV. 14, 1808,

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

MRS. ELEANOR EMERSON,

LATE CONSORT OF THE

REV. JOSEPH EMERSON.

BY SAMUEL WORCESTER, A. M.
MINISTER AT THE TABERNACLE IN SALEM.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.....ISAIAH.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED

WRITINGS OF MRS. EMERSON,

WITH A

BRIEF SKETCH OF HER LIFE.

Boston:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY LINCOLN & EDMANDS,
NO. 53, CORNHILL.

1809.

Price, 20 cents, stitched—45 cents, half bound.

SERMON.

1 THESS. i. 13.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

"BY one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Such, my brethren, is the standing declaration of the divine oracle, and its awful verity has been witnessed, by every generation of the children of Adam. The monuments of past ages are but so many affecting memorials of the human fall; and the living world abounds with melancholy proofs of the continued prevalence of sin, and the consequent curse. Death has reigned from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, and from Christ even down to the present day. Generation upon generation, the ruins of six thousand years, lie mouldering in dust; and from a blooming paradise, a garden of perennial delights, the wide earth has become a vast and gloomy Golgotha. Verily, "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, and man, in his best estate, is altogether vanity.

These, my brethren, and a sad group of reflections similar to these, are irresistibly forced on our minds, by the present mournful occasion. Death has just been erecting a new trophy before our eyes; a trophy over the grave of one, whom we all loved. We feel the shock; we bear a tender part in the sorrow of

the mourning relatives. We look at the badges of funereal grief; we look into the tomb where the dear remains of the victim are deposited; we raise our eyes, and survey the wide spread ruin around us, the boundless ravages of the relentless destroyer: And is this, we are ready to exclaim, is this the end of all whom we love! Is this the end of all the endeared connexions of life, of all human joys, and hopes, and prospects! Is this the end of all men! Alas, miserable beings! Yes, miserable beings indeed should we be, and gloomy indeed were our prospects, if in this life only we had hope. But thanks to INFINITE LOVE, the light of opening heaven has beamed, propitious, on this dark and dreary scene. Yes, my brethren, from this vale of tears, this region of death, we may look up with hope and with joy, to brighter prospects, and to a better world; for life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel.

The Jews, a considerable number of whom resided at Thessalonica, were accustomed to represent all, who were not of their nation, or incorporated with them by circumcision, as utterly lost at death. The idolatrous Gentiles also, if they had any hopes or fears of a future state, had no idea, however, of a resurrection of the body. On the death of their relatives and friends, therefore, they were wont to indulge in excessive lamentations, and the most frantic expressions of immoderate grief. But against the representations of the bigoted Jews, and the usages of the idolatrous Gentiles, the apostle was solicitous, that the faith of his Thessalonian brethren might be well secured. *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,* he says, *concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others, who have no hope.* 'I wish you to be well informed, respecting the resurrection of the dead, and the state of future glory; and to be firmly established in the faith, that as Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him: that you may not be distressed, by any prejudiced representations of the Jews, and may not indulge in the excessive la-

mentations of the Gentiles, as if there were no hope concerning your deceased christian friends, and no consolations attending their death.' These words of the apostle, my brethren, very clearly afford us this interesting doctrine, viz.

RELATING TO THE DEATH OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDS, THERE ARE IMPORTANT AND PECULIAR CONSIDERATIONS, SUITED TO CONSOLE THE PIOUS AND MOURNING SURVIVORS.

This doctrine, not unappropriate, I trust, to the present occasion, I shall endeavour, for the consolation of my bereaved brother and his mourning relatives and friends, and for the benefit of others, somewhat particularly to illustrate and improve.

I. To mourning survivors, it must be a consoling consideration, that their christian friends did not die, until life's great purpose, in respect to themselves, was answered.

What then, personally considered, is the great purpose of life? A momentous question this, and deserving of most serious attention.

Were we to judge by the conduct of a great part of mankind, we might be ready to conclude, that they were sent into the world, for no higher purpose, than to spend their few fleeting days in the eager and vexatious pursuit of unsubstantial, sublunary good. This, however, comports but ill with any just ideas of man, or of the wisdom and beneficence of our divine Creator. Inclined, as thoughtless mortals are, to grovel in the dust, with the beasts that perish; it can hardly, nevertheless, have escaped the most inconsiderate mind, that there is something in man, which indicates a vastly higher and nobler purpose of existence.

I appeal to you, my hearers. Are you not conscious of a something within you, which lifts your nature to an elevated superiority over all the tribes of mere animal being? Are you not conscious of capacities and powers, which suffer an immense degradation, when devoted, and chained down to the sordid pursuits and gratifications of appetite and sense?

Are you not conscious of a vast vacuity of mind, which can never be filled, by all which earth can supply, and which indicates, unequivocally, that you ought to aspire to something infinitely higher and better, more sublime and durable and excellent, than what can be found within the whole compass of this terrestrial scene?

Yes, my brethren, though man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble; though he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down, fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not; yet his destination is not limited by the boundaries of earth or of time. His nature has the stamp of immortality; he is to exist, when years and periods shall cease to be marked off, by the revolutions of planets or of suns; and the grand purpose of his present life is to prepare for his eternal state.

It is a truth never to be forgotten, a truth which can never be too often, or too solemnly revived in our minds, that we are fallen beings. Our common progenitor transgressed the command and covenant of God, and his whole posterity is involved in the ruinous consequences of his fatal transgression. But fallen though we are, we have not been left without hope of recovery. No; the Son of God himself was early announced as the Redeemer and Saviour of men; he has come down from heaven to die on earth for our redemption; and having reascended, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, he offers salvation, with immortal glory, to all who will come unto God by him. The world, with all its interests and concerns, is placed under his hand, and he manages the whole in complete subserviency to his own high purposes of justice and of grace.

Our present state, then, is properly a state of probation; of probation for eternity. Life and death are set before us; heaven or hell awaits the result of our trial; eternal joys, or eternal woes, are suspended on our improvement, or abuse, of the merciful dispensation, under which we are here placed. If, pending our probation, we penitently return to God, and believe

ingly accept the offered grace of the gospel, our sins will all be forgiven, our hearts and our consciences, sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, will be cleansed from all defilements, and to us there will be no condemnation or future wrath. Thus reconciled to God, and restored from the ruins of our fallen state, God will be our God, and Christ our shield, and strength, and salvation; and to all the fulness of his immortal kingdom, we shall have, through grace, an acknowledged and unfailing title.

Such, my brethren, is the great personal purpose of life; and, in respect to all our christian friends, this high purpose has been answered. If christians, in truth, they have obeyed the gospel. Penitently accepting the punishment of their sins, they have humbly returned to God; have cordially received Christ Jesus the Lord, and entrusted their whole salvation to him; have been renewed in the temper of their minds, formed to the love of God, to holiness and virtue, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

How important and glorious is this consideration! How important and glorious with respect to all true christians, and especially with respect to those, who have finished their earthly course and gone to their eternal home! and how consoling to their pious surviving and mourning relatives and friends! However short their course may have been, however few their days, they were not summoned away from these mortal scenes, till life's great purpose, in respect to them, was answered; till they were prepared for a better world.

II. To pious mourning survivors, it must be a consoling consideration, that their deceased christian friends did not die, until they had done some good in the world.

The moral system throughout is constructed on the principle of mutual relation and dependence. No being exists alone, or without some connexion with other beings; no individual exists without doing

some good, or some injury to others. This will hold true, most emphatically, with respect to mankind.

Such are the mutual relations and dependencies subsisting in families, in neighbourhoods, in smaller societies, in commonwealths, and nations at large, that no one can live and act, without affecting, to a greater or less extent, either beneficially or injuriously, others around him. In order to estimate the total amount of benefit or injury, done by an individual, we must be able to ascertain the whole influence and effect of all his words and actions, his plans and enterprizes, not only on those primarily affected, but also, through them, on others, and through these last, on others still, and so on as far as the circle of connexion and influence extends.

By the Lord himself from heaven, christians are emphatically characterized, as *the salt of the earth, and the light of the world.* Christians are the servants and the friends of God, engaged in his cause, and co-workers with him for the best interests of mankind. On their first return to God, they presented their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, and yielded their members as instruments of righteousness unto him, that they might live, henceforth, not unto themselves, but unto him, who had called them to glory and virtue: and though there is not a righteous man upon earth, who liveth and sinneth not; though the best of christians come far short of the glory of God, and are chargeable with many and great deficiencies; yet all, who are christians indeed, are useful, incalculably useful, in the world. Not a christian ever lived, even for the shortest time, as a christian, without some important benefit to mankind. His love to God, and love to men, his holy desires and fervent prayers, his words of truth and grace, and his actions of piety and virtue, all tend to good. His very breath, I had almost said, is of a tendency to counteract the fatal contagion of sin, and to purify and preserve the world. Had there been only ten righteous persons in Sodom, that

devoted city would have been so salted with grace, as not to have been consumed.

Of deceased christian friends, therefore, their pious survivors may be assured, that they did not leave the world, till they had done some important good. If it were only, indeed, on their death bed, and in the closing scene of life, that they became christians; yet who can calculate the good they have done? Who can calculate the benefit to those immediately around them, and through them to others, of a single word from their dying lips, on the reality and importance of religion, and to the honour and praise of the divine Redeemer? Who can calculate the benefit of a single desire of their hearts, of a single prayer, ascending with their last breath to the bosom of their Saviour and God? And who, then, can calculate the total amount of benefit, done by those, who for years have lived as christians, and walked with God in this evil world? And must not this be a most consoling consideration to their pious mourning survivors?

Yes, christians, your deceased pious friends neither lived, nor died, in vain. The world has been benefited, and will for ages be benefited, by their having been in it. By their means, in ways perhaps unknown to you, the best interests of mankind have been promoted, the cause of religion has been advanced, the holy name of our God has been glorified, the hearts of his people have been gladdened, and to some, ready to perish, the blessings of eternal salvation have been, or will yet be, imparted. Though their names be not great among men, and no marble honours designate their tombs; yet, truly, the memory of the just is blessed, and sweetly precious are the sacred memorials of their piety and virtue.

III. It is a consoling consideration, that deceased christian friends did not die, until it was best for them, and best for their pious survivors, that they should depart.

It is the consummating felicity of christians, that God is their God. His covenant with them, in Christ their Redeemer, is ordered in all things and sure. As

they have given themselves to him, on the ground of his gracious promise, he has taken them into his own family as his children, has taken the management of all their interests into his own hands, and all his perfections stand engaged for their perfect safety, and their highest welfare. All things, he has assured them, shall work together for their good; all things are for their sakes; all things, both present and to come, the world, and life, and death, are theirs.

"No man," says the apostle, "liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." As christians are the Lord's, it is their highest happiness to be where the Lord would have them to be. As long as it is his will for them to continue here, it is for their happiness to continue; and when it is his will that they should depart, it is for their happiness to depart.

The plan of God is perfect. In his infinite wisdom and goodness, he has assigned to all his people their several allotments of trials and services, and determined for them respectively, their bounds, their changes, and their periods; and it is for the highest good of the whole, and for the highest happiness of each individual, that his plan should be carried into effect, and that his allotments and determinations, respecting them all, should stand. Should any one of them live longer than his allotted period, it might in the event diminish his own happiness, and the happiness of millions for eternity.

Has a christian been removed in early life, and from the best hopes and prospects of usefulness here? Was it not because the wise purposes of God, respecting him, in this world, were accomplished, and his longer stay here, instead of being useful on the whole, would have been detrimental? Or, was it not because some place, or service awaited him in the invisible world, for which, in the wisdom of God, he was particularly designed, for which at the time of his death he was just fitted, and in his removal to

which, at that time, not only his own happiness, but the glory of God and the good of his kingdom at large were highly concerned? Or, was he not an idol here, and therefore removed, that his christian friends might give back their hearts to God, learn to place their whole dependence and hope in him, and thus attain to more enlarged views and fruitions of his infinite fulness? Or, finally, was it not important that he should be taken from this world, that it might be made to appear, that, notwithstanding his high promises of usefulness, the Lord could carry on his work here without him, and with other means and instruments, so accomplish his purposes as more effectually to secure the entire glory to himself?

Some reasons, beyond doubt, there are, some important reasons, though to us unknown, for the removal of christians from the world, at the particular times of their removal; and their longer continuance here would have been detrimental to them, and to their christian friends. It was for their own highest good, and for the highest good of their pious friends, that they should continue here no longer; and this, surely, is a consoling consideration.

IV. It may be consoling to pious survivors to consider, that the death of their deceased christian friends was an event of deep interest to all benevolent beings.

Is the repentance of a sinner an occasion of joy in heaven? And does the death of a saint pass without notice as an uninteresting event? We may assure ourselves it does not. No; but "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." It is the close of their momentous probation. It is the termination of all their disciplinary trials; the scene of their final conflict and their decisive victory; the moment of their passage from time to eternity, from earth to heaven, from a state of sin and suffering to a state of consummate holiness and bliss. The event is infinitely interesting, and engages the attention of both worlds.

It engages the attention of the everlasting Father of the universe. With all the tenderness of a father

infinitely kind, he regards his children in the trying hour; weak in themselves and dependent, but humbly and affectionately looking to him in whom is everlasting strength; bidding a final adieu to the world and all terrestrial scenes, but fiducially committing themselves to the arms of his love, while eternity with its amazing realities opens to their view; conflicting with death and the powers of darkness, but tenderly confiding in his promise of grace, and sacredly exulting in the hope of an immortal crown to be received from his hands. The whole scene he regards with infinite benignity; and graciously shedding upon it the cheering influences of Heaven, he dispels the darkness of the gloomy vale, and fills it with light and with glory.

It engages the attention of the benevolent Saviour of the world. He himself has known what it is to die; what it is to endure the agonizing pains of dissolving nature: and when his beloved followers are called to the awful scene, he is present with them, and, with all his divine and endearing sympathy and love, makes it his care, that nothing shall be wanting to their final triumph and joy. He shews them, that those whom he loves, he loves to the end, that he will never leave them nor forfake them, that his grace is sufficient for them; that he holds the keys of hell and of death, controls the legions of darkness, commands the armies of heaven, and orders at his pleasure the whole concerns both of time and eternity; and that, trusting in him, they may smile in the face of death, bid defiance to the powers of hell, look without dismay at the horrors of the grave, and safely and undauntedly pass the dread boundary of the invisible world.

This scene is interesting to angels, and engages their attention. With celestial alacrity and delight, they attend around the bed of the dying christian, minister to him in the hour of his last conflicts, wait the eventful moment of his dismission from this mortal state, and then convoy him in triumph to their own blest world of immortal light and joy. And to

saints, assuredly, this scene cannot fail to be interesting. Those on earth regard it with mingled emotions of fear and hope, of sorrow and joy, of sympathy and exultation; and those in heaven are all engagedness to welcome to their pure and blissful society the new heir of glory, and to hail his triumphant arrival, with celestial anthems of praise to God and the Lamb.

O, consoling thought to pious survivors. They are not alone and unnoticed in the day of their mourning. The event, so deeply affecting to them, is not to all besides, an indifferent, uninteresting occurrence; but one, in which God and Christ, and angels and saints take a deep, a tender, and a lasting interest. And while thus attentive to the *departing* saint, they surely are not unmindful of the pious relatives and friends, thus left behind in this vale of tears.

V. Pious survivors may consolingly consider that their deceased christian friends are happier and more useful than they could be in this world.

"For me to live is Christ, to die is gain." Christians, while here, are encompassed with infirmities, are beset with temptations, are engaged in a constant and arduous warfare with sin, the world, and the powers of darkness, and have to endure, almost without intermission, a great fight of afflictions. They see but through a glass darkly; their faith often staggers; their love often languishes; their best services are but very imperfect; their best joys and praises fall vastly below the celestial standard. But no sooner are they dismissed from these scenes of mortality, than they hasten to a state of perfect holiness and bliss. No sooner are they absent from the body, than they are present with the Lord; where they see as they are seen, and know as they are known. Their scenes of trial are closed, their warfare is accomplished, their infirmities, their imperfections, their sins are gone; and, all spirit and life, all love and peace, all delight and alacrity, they join the general chorus of angels and saints, in songs of un-

ceasing and unlanguishing praise, unto Him that loved them, and washed them in his own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God forever.

Little, indeed, do we know, distinctly, of the scenes and transactions of the world to come. It is not to be doubted, however, but that the enlarged powers of saints made perfect will find ample activity in their celestial state; and be employed in services and engagements, vastly transcending in interest and importance, any, to which saints on earth are ever called. Are they engaged in services of high import in different regions of the divine kingdom? Are they entrusted with various missions of deep interest to their friends and others in this world? Are they employed in numberless ways, to us unknown, for advancing the kingdom of the Redeemer, for extending the glory of God, for aiding one another to higher attainments in knowledge and felicity, for promoting in fine the general interests of the universe? They were active and useful, to a greater or less extent, here; and we may assure ourselves that their activity and usefulness will not be diminished, but, as well as their happiness, will certainly be increased, beyond all present conception, by their final removal from earth to heaven: for it is not in vain that God endows them there with enlarged desires and augmented powers for doing good.

"Why then their loss deplore that are not lost?
Why wanders wretched thought their tombs around,
In infidel distress? Are *angels there?*
Slumbers, rak'd up in dust, ethereal fire?
They live, they greatly live a life on earth
Unkindled, unconceiv'd; and from an eye
Of tenderness, let heavenly pity fall
On me, more justly numbered with the dead."

VI. The death of christian friends is calculated to promote the best good of their pious survivors. As no one liveth to himself, so no one dieth to himself. Such are the connexions of things, such the arrangements of infinite wisdom, that what is for the good of an individual, is also for the good of many. Joseph's

transmission to Egypt was not only for *his* advancement, but for the benefit also of his father, his brethren, and millions of mankind. Nor is the removal of a christian from earth to heaven for *his* happiness only, but also for good to his pious friends, and to the kingdom of God at large.

It is an event, suited to check the ardour of earthly affections, and the eagerness of earthly pursuits. It shews, in a strong light, the vanity of the present world, and the reality and importance of the world to come. It forcibly inculcates the lesson to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and trust only the living God. It brings surviving friends into a situation for profitable reflections on their present state and their important connexion with the future; on the transient nature of all sublunary scenes and the permanent glory of the celestial world; a situation to learn more of themselves, more of the grace of the gospel, and more of the fulness of God, whose consolations with them are not small, and who makes all things work together for their good; a situation, in fine, to take off their affections from the world, and place them on the things which are above.

Were their christian friends lovely and pleasant to them while here? How much more lovely and excellent are they now? and how far surpassing, in loveliness and excellence, all on earth, is the holy, the celestial society, to which they are now united? What then should there be on earth to engage the hearts of christians here? should they not rather ardently follow, with their affections, their desires and contemplations, their pious friends, who have gone before them, to the bright abodes of pure perfection, of consummate loveliness, of unfading glory? If the residents of heaven may occasionally visit these lower scenes, for the aid and comfort of those, who are yet struggling with the imperfections and calamities of mortality; they will not, however, return to dwell again in this dreary world: but their pious friends here will soon go to them. And is there not, in this interesting thought, something to

wean the heart from earth, and strongly to attach it to heaven?

Yes; in various respects, the death of pious friends is calculated to promote the highest good of their christian survivors.

Once more. Though committed to the dreary tomb, there to moulder into dust; yet the bodies of christian friends will ere long be raised, with renovated and immortal life and beauty.

The doctrine of the resurrection is a cardinal doctrine of the christian revelation. To the heathen world it was entirely unknown, and in this regard they mourned for their dead as having no hope. But, thanks be unto God, life and immortality; yes, my brethren, the life and immortality of the *bodies* of those who sleep are brought to light in the gospel. "The hour is coming, when all, that are in their graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." The resurrection, indeed, of Jesus from the sepulchre, is an animating proof, a precious earnest of the certain resurrection of all his people: he "is become the first fruits of them that slept."

"But some will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they appear?" The body is not to be raised, such as, when committed to the tomb, it was. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Of the manner of the resurrection, indeed, and of the bodies of the saints in their renovated state, we can have, at present, but very inadequate conceptions. That they will, however, be raised, and with an excellence and beauty, vastly transcending what has ever been known, in this scene of mortality, we may rest assured. Yes; they will be raised in a state of

excellence and beauty fit for an immortal union with spirits exalted to celestial perfection. Though it does not yet appear what the children of God will be; yet this we know, that, when Christ shall appear, they will be like him. Not only will they be assimilated to him, and bear his image, in their *minds*; but their *bodies* also will be made like to his glorious body.

And is not this, my brethren, a source of consolation? Are we afflicted and distressed, when we see those, whom we have loved, breathless, and pale, and divested of their charms by the cold hand of death, committed to the tomb, there to moulder into dust? And shall we not be comforted with the assurance, that low as their present state is, they will one day rise with all the animation, the beauty, the charms of immortality? Shall not christians be comforted with the sure prospect, that not only their pious friends shall thus be raised; but they themselves also will rise with them, formed for the most perfect enjoyment; join them in a vast society of congenial beings, and with them participate, without interruption, without fear of separation, in all the immortal felicities of the kingdom of God? This, especially, was the consolation offered by the apostle to his Thessalonian brethren; and it is surely a consolation, of which the people of God, in every age and land, may avail themselves with the utmost propriety and benefit.

This subject now admits of an interesting and appropriate

IMPROVEMENT.

1. It clearly results, my brethren, that it is a great thing to be a christian.

To be a christian, indeed, is not merely to reside in a christian land. It is not merely not to be a Pagan, a Mohammedan, or a Jew; it is not to sit under the gospel and coldly assent to its truth; it is not to be of externally regular and decent deportment and con-

versation in the world ; it is not, in fine, to assume the profession, and attend upon the institutions and forms of christianity. No ; it is something more than all this. To be a christian is to be restored from the apostasy and reconciled to God by the cross of his Son. It is to be obedient to the gospel, and, under its divine influence, to be transformed from the world, and renewed, after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. It is to be in Christ by a living faith, and to have Christ in the soul the hope of glory.

Yes, the christian is a cordial believer in Christ, and obedient to the gospel ; is formed to the love of God, and lives not unto himself, but unto Him, who hath called him to glory and virtue ; walks, not by sight, but by faith, and has his interest not on earth, but in heaven. By patient continuance in well doing, he seeks for glory and honour and immortality ; he is a blessing to the world while he lives ; his memory, after death, is blessed, and his eternal state is happy and glorious, in the full vision and enjoyment of his Redeemer and God.

2. How different from that of the christian is the case of the sinner !

The sinner is still a lost, a ruined being, under the power of death ; an enemy to God, an alien from heaven, condemned already, with wrath abiding on him. Destruction and misery are in his ways, and the way of peace he has not known. Refusing the offer of pardon and reconciliation, he spurns the Saviour, and tramples on his blood ; and after his hardness and impenitent heart, he treasures up wrath against the day of wrath. While he lives, he has no true peace, for the consolations of the gospel he has no heart to receive ; and when he dies, remaining a sinner, he dies without hope, or his hope, if any he have, must utterly perish. Alas ! how dreary, how cheerless, how terrible is the death of the sinner ! How terrible to himself ! how melancholy to his surviving friends !

3. There is abundant reason, why those, who mourn the loss of christian friends, should not indulge to immoderate grief.

It is not indeed in the spirit of the gospel to inculcate a stoical insensibility. It is not the design of christianity to render us indifferent to the events of life, and to divest us of our feelings and affections; but rather to make us tenderly alive to every occurrence, and to meliorate, exalt, and sanctify the sensibilities of our hearts. It is perfectly becoming the christian not only to rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep; but also to feel, with exquisite tenderness, the strokes of affliction, which fall upon himself. Jesus himself wept at the grave of Lazarus, whom he loved, and his amiable example is sufficient to justify the tears of his followers, which involuntarily drop on the tombs of their departed friends. "And indeed without such an authority, our sorrows on such an occasion might be vindicated, not only as a tribute of humanity, due to the living as well as the dead; but in some degree as a proper expression of our pious humility, under God's rebuking hand. For nothing is an affliction any farther than it is felt; and the very end of Providence with respect to us would be frustrated, if our hearts were not deeply penetrated and impressed with the stroke."

But the indulgence of grief has its proper limits; and on all occasions it becomes the people of God to testify their submission to the will of their Father in heaven, by duly moderating their sorrows, under the strokes of his hand. Especially does this become them on occasion of the death of their *pious* friends. Though on many accounts the death of *pious* friends is peculiarly affecting, and in proportion as by their piety and virtue and various amiable properties, they have endeared themselves to our hearts, their loss will be the more deeply felt; yet so many, and so rich are the consoling considerations connected with the event, that we must be unreasonable indeed, and even ungrateful, if our grief be not re-

strained within moderate bounds. For those of our christian friends, who are asleep, we *must* not, if we feel rightly, we *shall* not, sorrow, even as others who have no hope.

You are not to be informed, my brethren, that our subject applies, with all its consolations, to the present mournful occasion. No ; you need not to be informed that for the dear Mrs. Emerson, lately a worsh pper in these hallowed courts, lately a communicant at this holy table, and the beloved consort of the beloved pastor of this church, but now removed from all these mortal scenes, her spirit returned to God who gave it, and her mortal remains committed to the silent tomb, her christian friends are not to sorrow as others, who have no hope. Neither is it needful, at this time, and to this assembly, that a particular exhibition of her character should be given. To the most, if not all of my hearers, she was too well known to have this necessary. She has lived among you, and has given you an impression of her character, more lively, more just, and more grateful, than any representation of mine could give.

You feel her loss, for you knew her worth. You knew the superior endowments of her mind ; her quick and clear intelligence, her brilliant imagination, her animating vivacity, her ingenuous disposition, and her engaging social qualities. You knew how admirably she was formed to enliven and improve society, and to diffuse a useful and benign influence extensively around her. You knew how greatly she endeared herself to her respected husband and her numerous friends ; and you tenderly sympathise with them in the deep felt loss, which they have sustained. You knew her, especially, in the character of a christian ; a character of which, after she professed it, she was never ashamed ; a character at which she aimed, and with uncommon felicity and success, in every place to maintain. Yes ; and I feel a pleasing confidence when I say before you all, that, in relation to her, there are most important consider

ations, adapted, peculiarly, to console her mourning christian friends.

Is it not, indeed, evidently true, that, short as her life was, she did not die, until life's great purpose, in respect to herself, was answered; until, yielding her heart to the gospel, and fixing her faith and hope on its holy truths and promises, she had secured a part in the favour of God, and in the everduring kingdom of grace and glory? Is it not true that she did not die until she had done some good in the world? If the friends of the deceased Dorcas could shew, with tears, the coats and garments, which she had made, while she was with them; may not the friends of the departed Eleanor, with equal tenderness, shew still more interesting and numerous memorials of her piety and usefulness? May they not, in particular, point to the fruits of her instruction, in which she so eminently excelled, and shew, in different places, hundreds of young persons, whose minds she imbued with the rudiments of knowledge, and the principles of religion and virtue?

Deeply as her death is lamented, may we not safely assure ourselves, that she did not depart, until it was best for her, and for her christian friends, that she should be removed to more exalted scenes of action and enjoyment? Was not her death precious in the sight of the Lord; and an event in which the Redeemer of the world, and angels, and saints, must have taken a deep interest? Are we not warranted in the delightful confidence, that she is now, beyond our highest conception, happier and more useful, than she could have been, had she continued here? Is not her death calculated eminently to promote the best good of her christian survivors? And may not her pious friends, while weeping over her tomb, confidently look forward, with elevated and joyful anticipation, to that momentous day, when, with all who sleep in Jesus, she shall arise to renewed and immortal life, and beauty, and glory?

Yes; though she sleeps, she shall wake again! She shall wake at the voice of the archangel and

the trump of God! Her corruptible shall put on incorruption, and her mortal shall put on immortality; and then shall be brought to pass that glorious, triumphant saying, Death is swallowed up in victory! Let all her christian friends, then, moderate their sorrows on her behalf, and "comfort one another with these words."

To you, my dear brother, especially, would we affectionately apply the consolations of this subject. In the wise providence of our God, you have been called to great, and, in some respects, peculiar afflictions. If you have obtained distinguished favour of the Lord, in those whom he has given to be the partners of your life; you have been also peculiarly tried in having them so quickly removed from you. But little more than four years ago, you were called to follow to the grave your amiable, estimable, and greatly beloved NANCY, in less than one year from the date of your marriage with her:* and now your sorrows are opened afresh, and your tears are flowing for your departed ELEANOR. Yes, verily, the hand of the Lord hath touched you. Your afflictions are great, your sorrows are heavy; and with all the tenderness of friendship and christian affection, we sympathize with you, and bear our part in your grief.

But, my brother, "are the consolations of God small with thee?" Have you not occasion to sing of mercy as well as of judgment? Have you not abundant reason to moderate the sorrows of your mourning; to arise, anoint yourself, and come in to the house of the Lord? With respect to both of your dear deceased partners, does it not become you to sorrow, not as those, who have no hope? Does it not become you, as a christian, and especially as a minister of Christ, to encourage yourself in God, and modestly to let your pious resignation, and the comfort, with which you have comforted others, appear unto all?

* See note under Extract from Mrs. Emerson's Journal, toward the end of the book.

Yes, my brother, the ministers of Christ, on whom it devolves to strengthen the weak hands, and uphold them that are ready to fall, must not sink in the day of their trial; lest it should be as when a standard bearer fainteth. And we rejoice in the confidence, that you will be sustained, as heretofore you have been, and that your afflictions will redound, not only to the furtherance of your joy in God, but also to the great and lasting benefit of many. It is in the school of adversity, that the Lord is pleased often to train his servants for eminent usefulness. His ministers he exercises with affliction, that they may be able to comfort them who are in the like trouble, with those consolations, with which they themselves have been comforted of God. And happy, my brother, will it be, if, by your afflictions, your profiting, as we trust it will, should appear unto all; and the dear flock of your charge, and others to whom you may minister in holy things, should perceive the grace of God, bestowed upon you, and reap the benefit of your improved affections and labours. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. And he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

The loss which your dear little daughter has sustained, of a tender mother's pious concern, and early instructions and prayers, to her is unknown. To you she must now be an object of increased tenderness, solicitude, and care; and by the grace of God, may all your tenderness, solicitude, and care be blest to her. May she live to possess all that was amiable and excellent in her mother; and in her may you find all the satisfaction, which a good parent can find in the best of children.

To the widowed mother, the brothers and sisters, and the other relatives and friends of the deceased, whether present or absent, we fervently and devoutly wish a sanctified improvement of this affecting and solemn dispensation; and would most earnestly recommend that divine religion, which imparted such excellence and worth to her character, rendered her

so eminently amiable and useful in life, afforded her the best consolations in death, and formed her, as we trust, to a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. If, like her, they truly obey the gospel, if they be followers of those, who through faith and patience inherit the promises, their end also shall be peace, and their memory will be blessed.

The numerous young persons, who have been favoured with the instructions of the lamented deceased, cannot but be deeply affected with the solemn and mournful event of her death. As some of them are present, I shall be indulged, I doubt not, in a word of address to them.

The person, my young friends, whose loss we all deplore, you, who were once her pupils, can never forget; for you all loved and respected her. You will never forget her admirable manner in the conduct of her school, and the uncommon success with which it was attended. You will never forget her kindness and affection for her pupils, her engagedness and pains for their improvement, and her solicitude and care for their good deportment and their best welfare. Especially, you will never forget how much and how constantly she made it her aim, by her christian examples, instructions and prayers, to impress on your minds the pure and divine sentiments of the gospel, to bring you to the knowledge of your glorious Creator and Redeemer, and to direct you, in the delightful paths of wisdom and peace, to immortal felicity and glory.

Yes; you loved and revered her, and you will cherish her memory as the choicest treasure of your hearts. You esteemed her as your friend, your exemplar, your guide—I had almost said, your guardian angel. But she is gone, and you will see her in this world no more! That countenance, which once lighted up joy and emulation in your hearts, is now shrouded in death; that voice which once was music in your ears has ceased to be heard; those lips, which dropt as the rain and distilled as the dew upon

your tender minds, are now closed, and sealed to the great and final day.

But still she lives—she lives, we trust, in a better and brighter world; that world of glory and of bliss, of which she spoke to you so often, and to guide you to which was the great end of all her tenderest care for you. And does she not thence look down, and, as with an angel's voice, invite and conjure you to follow her thither? Oh, could you but see her there, could you but know what she there enjoys! how dearly would you prize the pious instructions she has given you; how sacredly would you treasure them all in your hearts; how solicitous would you be that, by them and other correspondent instructions, you might be formed to glory and virtue; that hereafter you too might join that blessed society, to which, through grace, she has been received. Remember, then, your Creator in the days of your youth; turn off your eyes from beholding vanity; with all the tenderness of repentance, faith, and love, give your hearts to your Redeemer and God, and be obedient to the gospel; and your lives will be amiable and useful, your death will be peaceful and precious, and your eternal state will be happy and glorious.

Brethren and friends of this church and society, in addition to the great and still deplored breaches before made upon your connexion, you have now lost another member, whom you justly esteemed as a distinguished ornament and blessing. To you all the event is solemn, affecting, and afflictive. To you all it is a divine admonition to be also ready for your final change; to awake from the slumbers of the world, and do with your might what your hands find to do; that you may be followers of those, who through faith and patience inherit the promises, and finally attain to the crown of immortal glory.

Knowing how greatly you esteem your beloved pastor, we have a pleasing confidence, that nothing on your part will be wanting, in the way of affection-

ate sympathy, to comfort his heart, under his heavy affliction. As he has not been an unconcerned, or unaffected spectator of the desolations of *your* families, the sorrows and afflictions which have befallen *you*, but has been among you as one who comforteth the mourners; so he will now experience, as heretofore he has done, that you bear with him a tender part, when the hand of the Lord touches him. And though his late absence has seemed, both to him and to you, painful and long; we trust in God, that he will now come to you with such renewed unctions of divine grace, as abundantly to supply what has been lacking of his wonted labours of love among you; and that, in the end, together with him, you will all have occasion gratefully to acknowledge, that the Lord has not been a wilderness to you.

To this whole numerous assembly the occasion of our present meeting is of serious and eternal import. It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that is the judgment. Are you, my respected and beloved hearers, prepared to meet your God? Are you prepared to die the death of the righteous and to have your last end like theirs. Let me entreat you, individually, to take this momentous question home, and ponder it with solemnity. And, oh, may the the Spirit of grace teach you all so to number your days as to apply your hearts unto wisdom.

"*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*"

AMEN.

WRITINGS

OF MRS. ELEANOR EMERSON,

WITH

A BRIEF SKETCH OF HER LIFE.

MRS. ELEANOR EMERSON, daughter of Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Martha Read, was born at Northbridge, Dec. 19, 1777. Her constitution was naturally slender; and she never enjoyed but very little good health. She was visited with many long fits of sickness, and for a considerable part of her life was exercised with severe pain. She was repeatedly brought so low, that physicians and friends despaired of her life.

The faculties of her mind were naturally vigorous. She had an ardent thirst for knowledge. But as she was early deprived of her father, she did not enjoy those advantages for gaining instruction, which her surviving parent earnestly wished to afford her; and which many of her sex enjoy. Very early, however, she made considerable proficiency in the art of reading, and eagerly perused every book that came in her way. When she was fourteen years old, scarcely any females of that age had read more than she. After that time, however, she was so taken up with her employment and with writing, that she found little time to read, till after her marriage. And when she died, no doubt thousands of females of her age had read much more than she. Though she was so happy, as to remember a large proportion of what she read, yet a very inconsiderable part of her information appears to have been derived from books, except what she derived from the Bible.

At the age of about fourteen she commenced her beloved employment of school-keeping. This she followed with great ardour, assiduity and success,

and with short intermissions, for twelve years. She often kept school through the day, when so sick, as to need a nurse through the night. Her excessive zeal in her employment she afterwards considered and lamented, as a mean of shortening her life. But it was very difficult for her to be persuaded to sit idle, while she realized the possibility of acting.

The branches, which she principally taught, were reading, spelling, writing, English grammar, defining words, composition, speaking,* plain needle work and religion. She thought it very unnecessary for misses to spend their precious time in learning the arts of painting and embroidery.

She kept school in Northbridge, Mendon, Leicester, Brookfield, Tunbridge, Chelsea, Bennington and Salem. She had a few scholars in Beverly also.

In the autumn of 1800 she found it needful to take a long journey for her health. Accordingly she proceeded as far as Peachum in Vermont. Having spent a few months with her connexions in that vicinity, and in some measure regained her health, she was introduced by her brother to the family of Capt. Mack in Tunbridge. She continued a few months as private instructress in that family, and then engaged in a school in Chelsea, an adjacent town about 25 miles west of Dartmouth College.

During her residence in that place, the people were visited by a very distressing and mortal sickness, of which she gives some account in the following

LETTER TO MRS. PATTY WHEELER.

DEAR SISTER, *Chelsea, Sept.* 16, 1801.

THE solemn events, that I have witnessed within three months, have served to cloud my mind with melancholy. The last time I wrote to my friends,

* She did not teach speaking, as a mere amusement, or ornament, but as one of the most useful branches her pupils could pursue. She was fully convinced by reasoning and facts, that however useless and pernicious speaking may become for want of skilful and judicious management, yet, when properly taught, it has a happy influence to rouse and improve the mind, to form the manners, give energy to the character, and perfect the pupil in the art of reading.

we were the happiest of mortals. Every countenance appeared healthy and contented. Our parties were frequent and pleasurable. Perfect unanimity bound us in the strictest intimacy and friendship. Though we did not suppose ourselves invulnerable, yet all considered the grim monster Death at a distance. But alas, he has appeared in all his dreadful horrors. He spares neither sex nor age, rich nor poor, young nor old. The illiterate and learned fall indiscriminately a prey to this ruthless tyrant. Many of my new friends, who with tender assiduity have watched over my sickly couch, and lamented, that such a flower should droop with untimely sickness and distressing agony, have themselves, dear sympathising souls, taken a quick retreat into the unknown regions of eternity. One day they were well; the next sick; the next dangerous; and the next in eternity.

It is a contagious fever, that makes such havoc among our species. The dysentery also is very prevalent. I have had a severe turn of it; but am better. There are more than twenty persons now sick within a hundred rods of my school-house; and most of them are considered dangerous. I love these people for the unnumbered kindnesses, I have received from them, and because they are refined and agreeable. But they are going, where I shall shortly follow, prepared or unprepared.

See the fallacy of earthly prospects. This town has been considered so healthy, that its inhabitants felt almost secure from sickness. Now there are not well persons sufficient to tend the sick.

ELEANOR READ.

The next year she had an invitation to take a school in Bennington, with which she complied.

LETTER TO MRS. MARTHA READ,

UPON THE DEATH OF MRS. PATTY WHEELER, WHO DIED AT WORCESTER, JUNE 6, 1802.

REVERED PARENT, *Bennington, June* 12, 1802.

BEFORE this time, you have probably experienced that, which you could never before realize, the loss of

a tender, worthy, grateful child. To say that the stroke is heavy to me would but confirm what you would naturally expect from my acute sensibility. I little thought, when the dear sympathising woman hung over my sickly couch with maternal tenderness and anxious solicitude for my recovery, that she would first enter those regions, to which I appeared to be swiftly hastening. But the ways of the Almighty are far above our comprehension. Let us therefore silently acquiesce in his will. O my tender mother, let not her sudden exit prey upon your declining constitution. Reflect on the unbounded goodness of God in sparing your family so long, while others have been bereft of every dear connexion. Reflect on your remaining blessings. Ten children demand, that you guard against grief, that bane of health, and for their sakes prolong, if possible, a life, which is truly valuable to them all, especially to those, who are single. Could you feel sensible of the filial ties, which bind my every affection to you, or know how completely my happiness depends on her, who gave me birth, you would from maternal love strive to preserve that life and health, which lost, must inevitably destroy every prospect of earthly felicity.

ELEANOR READ.

LETTER TO MRS. SALLY HERSEY.

BELOVED SISTER, *Bennington, Sept. 1, 1802.*

NOT all the applause of a flattering world, nor the kind attachment of surrounding friends, can make me forgetful of the ties, which bind my heart to a distant sister. I have no expectation of again visiting my maternal home, or of seeing the dear associates of my youthful days. Yet my mind dwells with mingled sensations of pleasure and pain on the scenes of joy and trouble I have passed.

My first beginning in this place was peculiarly trying. I had to endure sickness and trouble, such as I never before experienced. In the midst of greatness and grandeur, every face was new, and seemed marked with haughty ostentation. At length I summoned all my fortitude; and now I am borne on the lofty wings of fame.

ELEANOR READ.

CONCLUSION OF A LETTER TO MISS PHEBE HENDERSON.

Bennington, Dec. 10, 1802.

——This world is a state of perpetual trial. Let us therefore prepare for that eternity, where joys are not interrupted by cruel envy or black ingratitude; where friendship and love are universal and permanent. Phebe, the pleasures of this life at times appear to me, as they really are, trivial and light, as airy bubbles. When first we begin this tiresome pilgrimage, we view the pleasures of life as durable, form high plans of future greatness, and with blind enthusiasm hug the phantoms to our eager bosoms, till dear bought experience shews, that they are unsatisfactory. We droop our disappointed heads in fruitless regret at our past folly, and rush precipitately on something else equally foolish. Thus we proceed, till life's poor drama is ended, and unthought of miseries succeed, in just reward for the cruel murder of precious time. ELEANOR READ.

LETTER TO MRS. MARTHA READ.

ESTIMABLE PARENT, *Bennington, Dec.* 16, 1802.

With unfeigned pleasure I heard of your safe arrival at Leicester, and sincerely hope, that we shall all return thanks to the Almighty for his goodness in preserving your life to the present time.* There is, my dear parent, an awakening in this place; and many are solicitously inquiring, "What they shall do to be saved." Mr. Davis is indefatigable in his exertions to win souls to Christ. Ten persons stand propounded; and many others, as they hope, are brought out of darkness into marvellous light. Pray for your distant daughters,† that they also may be of that happy number. For eternity is at hand. Then ten thousand worlds for the friendship of Christ. But I am hard, as the adamantine stone. Yet I am

* Mrs. Read had removed from Northbridge to Leicester.

† Referring to herself and her sister Charlotte, then at Bennington.

resolved to attend meetings, and use other means. Perhaps the Lord may be pleased to pluck me, as a brand from the midst of the burning; for he is merciful and slow to anger.

Your dutiful daughter,

ELEANOR READ.

There is reason to hope that Mrs. Emerson was a subject of the reformation, mentioned in the above letter. Of this however the reader may have some opportunity to judge by perusing the following

ACCOUNT OF HER RELIGIOUS EXERCISES,

WRITTEN BY HERSELF AT BENNINGTON.*

In childhood I experienced anxiety for my future welfare, and was frequently brought to tremble under a sense of divine wrath. But the foibles and vanities of that early period of life diverted my attention till maturer years, when I had very serious impressions from time to time. Especially, when attending the solemn administration of the sacrament, I have felt painful sensations at the thought of being a neutral spectatress of that sacred institution; and have been led to reflect on the more awful separation, which might ere long sever me eternally from all the righteous. Yet, by intermixing with the giddy crowd, I foolishly procrastinated the all important concerns of my immortal soul.

Three years ago, on a visit at Northbridge, finding my young associates much engaged in the exalted pursuit of religion, my fears were revived; and for months after my return, I experienced distressing

* It is but just to inform the reader, that Mrs. Emerson wrote this account not only in haste, as she generally wrote her other compositions, but under the pressure of a disease, which she and others expected would prove mortal. She observed upon her death bed, that she intended to have transcribed it, but that it was left in a state so imperfect, that she sometimes wished it destroyed. It is published however with a few omissions, which do not break the connexion, and a few verbal alterations, which do not affect the sense. A few of the first lines are taken from the relation, which she gave the church at Bennington.

anxiety on account of my deplorable situation. But there being a general declension of religion in the place, where I then resided, I felt a degrading diffidence in conversing on that sublime and noble subject. In company with my gay associates, I appeared with usual vivacity, and presumptuously covered the inward struggles of a guilty conscience with the deceitful smile of complacency. No wonder then, that a heart searching God should in anger withdraw the strivings of his Holy Spirit, and leave me to blindness of heart and to a reprobate mind.

I soon considered my situation less dangerous than I had formerly supposed it, and upon retrospecting my past life was ready to believe, that my uniform morality and friendly benevolence, as I then blindly considered it, indicated a heart at peace with God. I therefore concluded, that perseverance in attending public worship, kindness to the poor and faithfulness in my employment, as a teacher, would induce the infinite Jehovah to exercise mercy toward me.

Since my residence in this place, I received a letter from the minister of a town, where I had resided,* in which he observed, that the degeneracy of Bennington was truly lamentable; that their depravity, infidelity and heaven daring wickedness had become a subject of lamentation to the friends of Zion. He also observed, that he thanked God, I was with them, to lead the dear young people in the ways of piety and virtue. This expression struck me very forcibly, and led me to reflect on my unworthiness and insufficiency to teach them that, with which I had reason to fear I was myself unacquainted.

About thanksgiving time, being invited to attend a ball, I declined, partly from a disrelish for such amusements, which I had found unsatisfying, and partly from a desire to secure my respectability with the more serious and influential, who were much opposed to scenes of juvenile hiliarity. The same afternoon a meeting was appointed for the examination of candidates for church membership. Just as I was prepared to attend this meeting, a request was

* Mr. Thompson, then minister of Chelsea.

brought me, to step into the house of a near neighbour. His lady was preparing for the ball. She immediately expressed her sorrow, that I was not going to be her company, and observed, that she hoped those christian friends were no hinderance. Feeling somewhat piqued at her thinking me overawed by the fear of others, I at once defied the whole fraternity of Christians to prevent my going, had inclination prompted; but remarked, that by reason of bad health, I had long felt indifferent to such scenes of merriment; although I considered them perfectly innocent. At this remark, I felt such a sting of conscience, that I hastily withdrew. As soon as I came into the street, I exclaimed aloud against my folly, which led me to sell my soul for the good opinion of dust and ashes.

I went immediately to the meeting, where I found a solemn collection of people. After prayer, a Miss Harmon related to the church what God had done for her soul. I was much affected. But on her mentioning the load of sin and guilt, that weighed down her spirits under conviction, I almost blushed for her, lest she had committed some black crimes, though her fame had escaped untarnished. Yes, I secretly thanked God, that though conscious of my impenitence, I was not like that wicked "publican."

On the evening of the same day, the faithful servants of the Lord assembled for the purpose of imploring mercy for the thoughtless multitude, who were ingeniously contriving to cheer their way to hell by sinful merriment. I did not attend the prayer meeting; but the next Sabbath evening I heard a gentleman relate the surprising effect it had on him. He observed, that he seldom attended evening meetings, but for the novelty of hearing what could be said on so simple an occasion as a "frolic," he at that time attended; and was exceedingly solemnized in hearing the fervent prayers of the pious supplicants for those, who were engaged, as he had often been in earlier life. The impression sunk deep in his mind, that if this was a sinful diversion, he was a sinner indeed. He continued thoughtful through the next day. His secret sins by the di-

vine agency were unveiled to his view in all their dismal forms. Sleep departed from his eyes and slumber from his eyelids. A weight of guilt oppressed him to such a degree, that he felt, as though it were impossible for him to arise, or even to turn himself in bed. But a glorious view of Immanuel's character was presented, and he was instantly delivered from his bondage, and made to rejoice in the light and liberty of the blessed gospel. Many, who had attended the ball, were present to hear him relate his experiences, and appeared sensibly affected, that they had been instrumental of great good, when they "meant not so, neither did their hearts think so." My sister, who had attended the ball, observed, that had she known at the time, that prayers were ascending to God to save her from impending vengeance, her feet would have performed their office but poorly, and the enchanting viol would have lost its melody.

From this time I resolved to lay aside all my high notions of thinking myself something, when I was nothing, and to strive unremittingly to obtain an interest in the blood of the Lamb. I meditated on the foolishness of labouring, as I had long done, "for that, which satisfieth not." I endeavoured to recal every thought, which wandered from the great object in view, and to look into my heart, and discern, if possible, whether any good seed remained there, which I might cherish and bring forward, to recommend me to God. I resolved not to spare myself, but to retrospect my past iniquity, and humbly to repent of my sins. This I found a most unpleasant task. To arraign myself before vindictive justice was truly mortifying. I could find however but few sins, comparatively speaking, which did not appear counterbalanced by the great good I had done in the world. These few however would eternally shut me out of heaven, unless repented of. Consequently I determined to make it the business of my life to deplore my sins, and become reconciled to God. I attended to reading and to meetings, which were frequent, and above all to prayer, entreating of God to show me the iniquity of my heart, and to have mercy on

me. I refrained entirely from levity, and was resolutely determined to shun all vain and idle company, lest I should be induced to give up my resolutions, and return to the pursuits of the world.

At this time, I suppose that I could have cast off all my seriousness, and enjoyed life as formerly. Yet God suffered me not to attempt it; but was pleased, notwithstanding my pharisaical endeavours after righteousness, to give me increasing evidence of the entire sinfulness of my heart.

One night being unusually distressed, I conversed till late with my sister on our undone situation by nature. I told her, that, in addition to my distress for myself, I experienced anxiety for her and others of our family, similar to what the rich man in the parable felt for his brethren, "lest they also should come into the same place of torment." A little before day I fell asleep, and just as the day dawned, I was suddenly awaked with the following words, which I thought were uttered by an audible voice; "Arise, O sleeper, and call upon thy God, if so be he will have mercy on us." I was amazed, when I found the house silent, and my sister in a deep sleep. I thought it was a call to me, and endeavoured to cry for mercy.* But my weakness, fatigue and great want of sleep soon overpowered my spirits, and I sunk again into slumber. But what was my surprise on hearing the same words repeated in a more earnest manner than before! I arose in haste, and strove to find language, which would penetrate the Almighty ear, and ensure a blessing. But alas, I began to realize, that the prayers of the wicked are abomination to the Lord. My conviction rapidly increased; and my exertions were proportionably great. I refused to indulge in sleep; but contrived many ways to drive the unwelcome messenger from my pillow.

Frequently after the toils of the day were ended, which in my great school were truly laborious, I have gone immediately to meeting, tarried till nine

* There is no reason to suppose, that Mrs. Emerson thought this a miraculous call, but only a special call in providence.

or ten, returned extremely unhappy, then sat up reading and mocking God with selfish prayers till twelve; and after that, being worn out with pain and a distressing cough, have gone to bed, resolving not to sleep, till I could sleep in safety. Frequently on perceiving drowsiness taking hold of my senses, I have arisen in bed with something thrown over me, and thus continued till lost in sleep.

Through all this popish penance I found myself no better, but daily growing worse. My sins of childhood and youth stared me in the face. But still I hugged to my heart the benevolent acts of my former life, and determined, that they should cancel some part of the mighty debt, in which I saw myself so deeply involved, or at least soften the rigours of my future punishment. When asked, whether I saw that God would be just in cutting me off, I answered, "Yes, perfectly." But my heart would secretly require an abatement of his justice on account of my love to his people and attendance on his worship.

From my apparent resignation and former attention to religion, christians were much deceived in me, and felt a comfortable hope, that I had previously passed from death unto life, and that my trials were such, as many pious souls are called to endure. This mistake was of all things the most distressing to me. For as I began to despair of the efficacy of my own prayers, I depended greatly on the prayers of the righteous. My great fear was, that other poor sinners would become subjects of their supplications, while I should be left to perish. Fearful thought! It filled my soul with horror.

Under the apprehension of suffering from the mistaken views of christians, I wrote to my friend, Mr. Thompson, the minister of Chelsea, beseeching him to bring my particular case before God, and without cessation to implore divine mercy on my poor, perishing soul. I entreated him and his pious companion, by every tie of friendship, to pray fervently for me day and night. And I felt a momentary

relief from having engaged them to labour for me, even though all others should neglect me.

During all this time of trial and concern, I felt a sense of the duty, devolving on me, to warn my pupils constantly of their danger, and exhort them to repentance. To this I attended constantly, solemnly urging them to forsake sin, and cleave unto the Lord. Thus I continued labouring, till my health was so impaired, that with difficulty I attended to my school.

But I was still a stranger to the depths of iniquity, which I was fostering in my polluted heart. I felt no heart rising against God, and but little disposition to consider him a hard Master. About that time, my sister was brought under pungent conviction; and the first evidence, that I had of my opposition to God's government, was a distressing fear, that she would first be brought home to God. Here was the first contradiction, that I realized, to my supposed good will to all my fellow creatures. I endeavoured to reason myself out of this rankling envy. But God's justice was immediately arraigned for not regarding my incessant cries and tears. I was willing to have her accepted; but justice appeared to demand, that I should receive the blessing first.

The next instance, which I perceived of this heart-rising against God, was on being disappointed in not riding to meeting. I thought, that, as God governed the universe, this seeming accident had taken place according to his predetermination; and it appeared to me an evidence, that he had predetermined me for destruction. This thought gave me exquisite distress, and filled me with hatred to his holy government. As I had often exclaimed against others for cavilling at the conduct of Jehovah, I concealed my feelings as much as possible; and conceiving them to be extremely sinful, endeavoured to gain an ascendency over them. But repeated disappointments of this kind served to increase my enmity against God.

I strove assiduously to rid myself of this most uncomfortable heart rising against the glorious Lord of the universe. I queried with myself; "Is this the

tender, benevolent heart, which never wished ill to any created being? And shall it rise in hostility against the Father of mercies, that Being, who has so tenderly upheld, protected, and nourished me?" But alas! it was reasoning with a heart of stone. God had dealt hardly and cruelly with me in giving me existence. "O for the privilege of annihilation. Dreadful thought! but far preferable to an existence of unremitting misery." Tears had deserted me, and the burning commotion of my tortured bosom was indescribable.

In this wretched situation, my feelings toward my fellow creatures became hard. Even my beloved school, which had previously been an asylum of peace and quiet, now filled me with rage and despair. I there found myself surrounded by wretched immortals, many of whom, being under fearful apprehensions of danger, seemed to upbraid me with being the vile instrument of their ruin.

I now clearly discovered, "that by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified." I discovered, that all my external goodness was from motives of self-exaltation; or, what is still more displeasing to God, that it was designed as a substitute for the righteousness of Christ. Then all my refuges of lies failed me, and God out of Christ appeared a consuming fire. I felt, that I was a solitary instance of the implacable vengeance of God; and I desired nothing more ardently, than to usurp the power of the Almighty, and rob him of his dominion.

One evening Mr. Rawson, who boarded with me, mentioned, that after much trouble he had procured a seat for me to ride to meeting. Just before he spoke, I felt too full of rage to say any thing; but this mock kindness, as it then appeared, overcame my silence, and I abruptly told him, I would not go; nor would I ever attempt to go to meeting again. Mrs. Smith, with whom I boarded, meekly inquired the reason of this rash and alarming resolution. I told her, that I had been too often disappointed to attempt going again; and if I should go, it would only heighten my condemnation. With tears of christian pity, she tenderly asked me, who were the ob-

jects of my resentment; adding, that knowing my anxiety, she had frequently staid at home, that I might be accommodated with a seat to go. My base heart immediately rose against this lovely woman, who had been to me the tenderest of friends. I arose in haste from the table, where I was sitting, lest I should utter blasphemous words against her and her God. My hatred of others was now complete. For she had long been the only object, that I could view with the least complacency. I felt, that heaven and earth and hell were in hostility against me. Even my tender parents had become objects of my hatred, because they had never given me up in faith to God. My sister came into my chamber, and tenderly entreated me to take her place in the carriage, adding, that she would stay at home. I uttered expressions, to which before we were strangers, and assured her positively, that I would never go to meeting again. She left me with a sorrowful countenance to deplore my awful situation. The evening being extremely cold, I covered myself in bed, and with presumptuous hardness dared the vengeance of God. My sins with all their accumulated aggravations stared me in the face; and my good deeds, which I had cherished as the apple of my eye, seemed to bear a more threatening aspect, than the blackest crimes. These had been my Saviour, that had long whispered "peace, when there was no peace." I now considered my state as desperate; and the burning indignation of my heart convinced me, that hell had assumed its horrid reign in my soul.

I had long striven to conceal and subdue my distressing enmity. I now endeavoured to recal the loving kindness of God, and to reflect on my audacious wickedness in defying the wrath of him, who could easily sink me to endless perdition. But alas, I was callous to all tenderness or relentings; and, O amazing madness! I longed to know the worst of anticipated vengeance.

In the morning, after a sleepless night, I endeavoured to compose myself to appear before the family. Mr. Davis inquired tenderly for my health, which he observed to be very low in consequence of my cough

and a constant pain in my side. I endeavoured to answer him as calmly as possible. But I thought he designed to remind me, that I was on the verge of hell. He questioned me respecting the state of my mind, to which I made but little reply, harbouring the mistaken notion, that he and all other christians exulted in my ruin. He asked whether I desired christians to pray for me. I told him, "No, by no means. I have been foolish enough to make this request publicly. But I am now convinced, that my name was enrolled upon the black catalogue of reprobates from eternity, and that all the prayers of men and angels can never alter the divine decree."

After my sister obtained comfort, I reflected upon the numberless exhortations, I had given her, to flee from the wrath to come, and upon the nights we had spent together in sleepless, gloomy wretchedness. All this, I supposed, was for the sole purpose of bringing her to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The words of our Saviour seemed verified in us, "There shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left." These views filled me with horror; and my heart and flesh felt on fire. Time appeared exceedingly short. Eternity seemed within reach. My rebellious heart appeared somewhat humbled, and I endeavoured to pray. My heart, filled with turpitude and malice, seemed ready to burst; and I more than once besought God to subdue its rage, even though he should consign me over to remediless ruin. Sometimes I ardently wished to know the worst of my expected destiny, and to sink so deep in the regions of despair, as to screen my anguished soul from the dreaded view of an incensed God. My countenance was depicted with horror. I shuddered at my own wretched aspect. My dear Mrs. Smith would often turn from me in tears, which, I supposed, she compassionately shed in view of my approaching ruin; but which, I have since been informed, were caused by the fearful glances of despair, darted from eyes, once placid and serene.

I repaired to school. But oh! what a wretched place did I find it. Not the abode of the damned

seemed more dreary to my tortured soul. Numbers of my dear pupils were in a situation, similar to my own. With eyes, red with weeping, they came to me for succour, and seemed to wonder, that I was not as ready to administer consolation, as formerly to point out their danger. But alas, I, who was once alive without the law, was now dead by the revival of sin. It was a most aggravating consideration, that I, who had so frequently and so solemnly "preached to others, must myself be a castaway."

But with this class of pupils I was less, far less miserable, than with those, who were solicitous to rejoice one another with the news of their happy change, and the unspeakable joys derived from reconciliation to God. Here was displayed the sovereignty of God and his electing love, cutting, most cutting to the natural heart, and almost too painful for mine to bear. O scene of wretchedness! This surely was a participation of the miseries of the damned; nor can I conceive, that any would doubt of a hell, while, like me, they felt a degree of it in their own breasts.

Feb. 18, 1803. After a wakeful, hopeless night, I repaired to school, fully resolved to dismiss my irksome employment, and resign myself up to despair. At noon, knowing that Mr. Spaulding was in the house, I smoothed down my features, and endeavoured to assume a smile, if possible to conceal the horror that reigned within.

[After a long and very solemn conversation with Mr. Spaulding, which there is not room here to insert, Mrs. Emerson proceeds to relate her feelings.]

"I am indeed," thought I, "a monument of God's vindictive indignation. O that I could hide myself under the rocks and mountains. O what a curse is existence, if I must remain in the power of a Being, I hate with the most implacable hatred." Here again I endeavoured to reason on the perversity of my feelings, and to reconcile myself to the idea of being in his hand, as the clay in the hand of the potter. But alas, I found this idea more and more dreadful. These were my feelings: "The wrath of Almighty God abides, and will ever abide, upon my soul. I feel already the load of sin and guilt, which must forever sink me down in ruin.

There is an awful controversy between my burdened soul and its incensed Maker. O that I had died in childhood, before my enormous sins became as the sand on the sea shore for multitude. O that I had been bred in a land of heathenish darkness, that my crimes might have been less aggravated. O that my powers of mind had been less vigorous, and that my opportunities of gaining instruction had been curtailed. O that I had been an idiot, rather than a sensible being, destined to the eternal, poignant stings of a guilty conscience. O for the envied situation of the most loathsome of brutes, rather than to endure the flames of that fire, which is never quenched, and the gnawings of that worm, which never dies. But even this is denied me. I must go with all my boasted talents and qualifications, which a deceitful world has called endearing, to dwell with legions of unholy spirits and damned souls."

The meeting, usually attended on this day, was a terror to my soul. I had now determined to attend no more meetings. But lest my tarrying should be attributed to the plain conversation of Mr. Spaulding,* and some good people should receive gratification from his faithfulness to me, I concluded to go for the last time ; and in all the obstinacy of despair to hold up my head, which had long been bowed down, like a bulrush. An aged man come forward, and in trembling accents related what God had done for his soul. Then a girl of ten years old, in a manner the most animating, related her remarkable experiences. I began to reflect on the assertion of Mr. Spaulding, that *God is good.* "Surely," thought I, "these happy souls can attest the truth of this assertion. Their salvation is really as important as mine ; and it is remarkable, that I should rejoice in their happy deliverance from the bondage of sin. God has been long, very long tendering me the same blessed deliverance. But I, a fool indeed, with such a price to get wisdom, had no heart to it. Why then should I murmur ? How can I repine ? I am forever lost ; but God is just." Upon this most hearty confession, my

* Referring to the conversation mentioned page 42.

long pent tears flowed rapidly; and while bursting sobs almost tore my heart asunder, I reviewed my wicked, desperately wicked exercises toward Him, whom I now saw to be just even in my eternal condemnation. "Surely," thought I, "of all the unreasonable wretches in existence, I am the most deserving of hell." Here I experienced such unusual convulsions of body, as induced me to take hold of a chair before me, to enable me to keep my seat. I verily supposed, that my soul was taking its final separation from my body. I attempted to rise, in order to go into another room; but found it impossible. "I must expire," thought I, "in the midst of this assembly for an example of God's righteous displeasure. It is just, that it should be so, and every one present must rejoice in this expression of his indignation against such a vile worker of iniquity." Here I viewed myself a criminal, justly condemned to all the tortures of endless despair. No gleam of hope beamed on my benighted soul. No fond expectation from creature aid whispered consolation. Against God only had I offended, and done this great wickedness, and he only could afford me help.

My soul seemed humbled in the dust in view of my condemnation, while I was constrained to cry in spirit, "Even so Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." At this view of my wretched, hopeless situation, the following words passed sweetly through my mind, and with such delightful energy, as thrilled through my whole soul, and filled me with rapture unspeakable. "Jesus, to thy dear faithful hand, my naked soul I trust."* At this most cordial disposal of myself into the hand of a glorious Redeemer, the thick clouds seemed to disperse, and give place to such a transporting view of the glorious Saviour, as no words can express. With an eye of faith, I beheld his transcendent glory more conspicuous, than that of the natural sun in meridian splendour, when bursting from behind the thickest clouds. I could no more doubt of the being and divinity of Christ, than of my

* The reader will bear in mind that she thought herself on the borders of eternity.

own existence. He was presented to my spiritual view in such substantial glory, as caused me to adopt the acclamation of the astonished Thomas, "My Lord, and my God." Here all my distress subsided, and all my anxiety for beloved self was cured. I was astonished, that I could ever feel such anxiety for myself. The greatness of God's character, and the glorious scheme of redemption filled me with wonder, admiration and joy. I raised my head, and looked on Mr. Spaulding, who was zealously engaged in illustrating the righteousness of Christ. But, O how altered was his aspect! "How beautiful," thought I, "are the feet of him, that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth." I no longer disbelieved the good man's assertion, that he would serve his God, if he knew, he had no portion with him. Who would not do the same? "Surely," thought I, "I will serve him, though I have no distant hope of being saved. Yes, my whole life shall be devoted to his blessed service; and though I must go down to the dark abodes of horror, I will there convince the blaspheming crew, that God is good, superlatively good, though the whole race of mortals should be doomed to hell." Here I looked round on the attentive assembly. Every countenance appeared joyful. I blest God that he had opened the eyes of all the precious auditory. It appeared, that every heart was rejoicing in the salvation of God.

Here I began to query, "What has produced this mighty change? Why is my soul, lately so tumultuous, thus calm and joyful? Is this the conversion, which I have been blindly seeking? Is this the new birth, without which none can enter the kingdom of God? Surely not. For my sins appear more aggravated, and I feel more hell deserving than ever. No. God in infinite mercy has been pleased to hear me in my late fervent request,* to subdue the enmity of

* It was not the opinion of Mrs. Emerson, at least in her latter years, that the prayers of the wicked are acceptable to God.

my rebellious heart, and in this way to capacitate me to do some good to his children, while I am suffered to live in the world. And O, how cheerfully will I engage in his service even on my way to hell. I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvellous works."

In the evening, Mr. Rawson, while leading in family prayer, made mention of the elect, with fervent entreaty for their ingathering. In this petition I found my desires going out to God in perfect unison with his, fervently wishing, that Christ's kingdom might be gloriously built up to the disappointment of Satan and all his subtle emissaries. Here again I noticed the sudden alteration in my feelings. Had the subject of election been mentioned in the morning, my soul would have revolted from the painful, agonizing theme. But now I rejoiced, that some of our fallen race would be saved through the eternal, electing love of God. Such were the joyful exercises of my heart, even though I had no thought, that I was interested in the blessed scheme of grace. Self was out of sight. I was too inconsiderable to lose a thought upon myself at this happy moment, when Christ, with his ten thousand charms, was presented to my soul.

The next day I ventured to inform Mrs. Smith, that I had lost my opposition of heart, at least for a season. "For a season?" replied she with tears of joy, "I hope, and trust you have lost it forever." Here I felt suspicious, that she thought me converted, and as I was decidedly of a contrary opinion, I was unwilling she should be deceived. But I felt too happy to trouble myself much about it.

At the usual hour I repaired to school. Here the alteration appeared more evident, than in my own heart. Every countenance appeared inexpressibly beautiful. I recognized the finger of God in every feature of every face. "Surely," thought I, "you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Who can withhold adoration from your Maker?" I queried with myself, whether this happy, delightful place could be the same, in which I had lately passed so many dark, dreary hours of despair and horror; and whether

those sweet youths could be the same, that but yesterday I had viewed as demons to torment me before my time. I walked the room in heavenly contemplations, and my heart seemed to overflow with sweet adoring ecstasy. Now my labour was pleasant. My capacity for instructing youth and facility in gaining their confidence, which I had lately cursed, I now considered my most distinguishing blessings. I ardently thirsted for more knowledge, that I might pour wholesome instruction into the opening minds of my attentive pupils, who viewed me with almost filial affection. With what rapture did I reflect on my most eligible employment. O who would not desire " to rear the tender thought" to God, and teach the listening youth the way to glory ?* In this strait and narrow way, I determined to direct my perishing charge, though my prospect of the heavenly Canaan was from the top of Pisgah, and I supposed the sentence of the Lord was already pronounced, " Thou shalt not go over thither."

In the evening I had opportunity to join in prayer with Mr. Davis. He ingeniously particularized every individual present, except myself, praying earnestly for their immortal welfare. I felt reconciled to being thus overlooked, considering myself too vile to engage the prayers of God's people.

The next day Mr. Spaulding preached in the most terrific manner. He showed forth the terribleness of Christ's coming to judgment, and treated of the confusion and dismay of his enemies at his glorious appearing. I trembled on account of others, whom I considered his enemies; but to my astonishment, found my heart exulting at the thought of his glorious coming. My inmost soul seemed bursting from its brittle tenement, to meet the triumphant Conqueror. Although I had no hope of my own salvation, yet the prospect of the blessedness of innumerable intelligences, together with the everlasting glory, to be thereby reflected on the character of Immanuel,

* Can any real christian consider it beneath her dignity to instruct young immortals in those things, which by the divine blessing may render them useful in this world, and happy in the next ?

filled me with joy unspeakable. With difficulty I refrained from loud acclamations of praise to the omniscient Judge of quick and dead. But as the preacher pronounced the awful sentence of our Judge against the wicked, "Depart ye cursed," &c. I felt that I could not quit the lovely Saviour. I felt no dread but that of leaving forever the sum of all joy and beauty. Here I found myself cleaving to him, and sheltering myself under the shadow of his protecting wing. Here I rested securely, and feared not the united force of earth and hell. I can never describe how small, worthless and happy I felt in this glorious asylum. Willing to be overlooked by all, I wished for nothing, but to feast eternally on my glorious Advocate, and to lean my little self on his lovely bosom.

These sweet refreshings from the Lord shone so conspicuously in my countenance, as to lead my friends to conjecture, what was going on in my heart. Several asked me, if I had not obtained a hope. I replied, that I had not even asked myself that question, and was not qualified to answer them.

At night my sister questioned me closely on the subject, and I was constrained to acknowledge, what I had but recently discovered, that nothing short of the almighty power of God was able to effect this change in my views and feelings, and I began confidently to hope that he had taken my feet from the horrible pit and miry clay, and placed them on the rock, Christ Jesus. We passed much time in relating our exercises, and admiring that free sovereign grace, that had snatched us, poor orphan strangers, from eternal burnings, and put a new song into our mouths, even praise to the living God. O that I could communicate to thoughtless, pleasure seeking youth the sublime happiness we here enjoyed. Not all the combined variety of juvenile vanities, not all the honours of an applauding world could bear the weight of a feather, in competition with our exceeding joy.

How great was the change in my feelings in the course of a few weeks! At variance with the greatest good of the universe, and loathing my very being,

life had become a burden ; while my emaciated frame threatened me with a still more wretched condition. But now my every wish, my every desire centered in the glory of Christ's kingdom. A firm persuasion, that his cause would finally prevail to the everlasting confusion of all its enemies afforded far greater joy and consolation, than I could have realized from an assurance of my own eternal felicity.

I now opened my mind to christian friends, and freely declared, what God had done for my soul. I found such satisfaction and delight in obeying the commands of Christ, that the frequent intimations in scripture and many complaints of christians of the difficulties of daily taking up the cross appeared obscure and paradoxical.

This doctrine however was soon clearly illustrated by a remarkable trial, with which I was exercised soon after giving my relation to the church. During my long agonies of soul under conviction, it had been often impressed upon my mind, while crying for mercy, that I could not expect mercy, while I lived in the neglect of daily prayer with and for my pupils. When the thought returned with pungency, I was often induced to vow to the Lord, that, if he would grant me his grace, I would perform this, and all other duties with promptitude. Now for the proof of my readiness to perform the vows, which my soul had made in anguish. The duty of praying in my school appeared indispensable. The worth of souls, bound to eternity, seemed to urge the necessity of attempting to lead their minds in prayer and praise to their Creator. Praying with them seemed the most probable way to accomplish this. Gratitude to God seemed to urge the immediate execution of my long premeditated design. But pride was totally repugnant to the procedure. I feared, that praying in my school would be deemed ridiculous enthusiasm by those, whom I lately held in high estimation ; and that even christians would say, " The beginning is too high, we tremble for the end." Here I began to hesitate. I searched the scriptures, to see, if the injunctions to women, not to speak in the church, and

other passages, would not excuse me from the painful cross. But I found nothing, that touched my employment. My conscience therefore was more than ever pressed to be faithful to souls, committed to my charge.

After a painful trial of many days, I again resolved by divine assistance to engage in the solemn exercise. But how can I ever describe the conflict in my mind between pride and duty. The evil adversary, together with my wicked heart, brought a thousand objections to deter me from putting in practice my good resolution. The chamber, in which I taught my school, was directly over the shop of a person, with whom I had been much acquainted. I knew him to possess a tolerable share of wit, which was chiefly directed against religion. I knew my voice might be distinctly heard below; and I imagined it would furnish constant sport for him and his vain companions. This was an objection almost insurmountable. I had large scholars, who were well informed, and capable of criticising on my performances, which, I had reason to expect, would be very bad. As I had never attempted to pray in an audible voice, I fancied my words would alarm myself, and prevent that heart service, which alone is acceptable to a heart searching God. These, with numberless similar obstacles, arose to terrify and distress me. But none was more potent, than the fear, that I should be left to bring reproach upon religion, should I thus set up myself for a light and example to others.

After much perplexity, I came to the determination to dismiss the trying subject, and by doubling my diligence in praying for my pupils in secret, and by carefully attending to every command of God, to be relieved from the painful cross, I had so much dreaded. I also thought it possible, that it was only an over righteous or enthusiastic spirit, that had possessed me, and which I must, and would dismiss.

After this deliberate and firm resolve, I endeavoured to turn my meditations upon God and Christ, the pleasing subjects, that had lately so much rejoiced my soul. But alas, my day was turned into darkness, and every cheering ray of hope was gone. I was

amazed at this sudden and surprising alteration. All my former evidence was concealed from my view. I wondered, with what falsehood I had so far imposed upon the church, as to induce them to accept me. In this unexpected extremity, could I hesitate about applying for relief to Him, who had preserved me through six troubles and through seven?

I immediately retired to pour out my complaint to Him, "who heareth the young ravens, when they cry." But all was darkness, Egyptian darkness. I could not entertain the least clear conception of the nature or attributes of Jehovah; and I felt that I was addressing an unknown God.

Having passed a few days in this gloomy manner, endeavouring to cry to God for the light of his countenance, I opened my mind to my friend, Mrs. Smith. I observed to her, that as the next Sabbath was the time appointed for my joining the church, I could not think of its approach without trembling; and that the very naming of the sacrament caused my blood to chill in my veins. She appeared tenderly interested in my trial, and told me, that she did not dare to advise me to go forward in this momentous business with such feelings of horror; but hoped God would enlighten my path of duty, and lead me by the side of still waters.

My attention was so engrossed with my sad reverse of feelings, that it did not occur to my mind, that it was my "fleeing from the presence of the Lord," which had raised this tempest in my soul.* Though my distress appeared greater, if possible, than before, yet I could pronounce God to be just and good, though the blackness of darkness should be my eternal habitation. And his goodness appeared manifest in opening my eyes on my real condition, before they were opened to everlasting disappointment. I often retired for the purpose of laying my case before God, and imploring his merciful direction with regard to my covenanting with him the ensuing Sabbath. But I could not gain access to the mercy seat. The thought of professing religion without the least hope of possessing it, threw me into unutterable

* See Jonah, i. 3, 4, &c.

horror; and I resolved not to make the presumptuous attempt.

Saturday evening, as I sat ruminating on my sorrowful state, I viewed myself cut off from all my anticipated bliss, destined to linger out a miserable existence without God and without hope, abhorred by holy beings, lost to all the pleasures of time and sense, an inactive, useless, loathsome being. At this thought the question arose in my mind, "Why *inactive* and *useless*? Though no ray of joy shall ever beam on thy benighted soul, yet be up and doing in the cause of Christ. Other souls are as precious as thine. Seek and strive unremittingly for their salvation, whatever becomes of self." This thought, though unaccompanied with the least gleam of hope, afforded joy. "Yes," my heart replied, "I will be in earnest for God. His cause is glorious, transcendently glorious; and it will add new lustre to his perfections to separate me from all good unto all evil. I will resolutely engage in whatever appears to be duty."

Here I determined to engage immediately in searching out duty and entering upon it with renewed vigour, suffering no obstacle to hinder, where it should be made clear and plain. In this resolve, I trust, my heart unconditionally acquiesced without the most distant expectation of being personally benefited by a life of obedience.

In my researches after duty, my late resolution of not professing Christ occurred, and appeared to lie in the way of observing his other holy injunctions. This brought me to resolve upon a speedy compliance, even though clouds and darkness enveloped his throne. I also determined on a strict observance of the Sabbath, on faithfulness to my fellow creatures, on mortifying all my sinful passions and appetites, with a constant watch over my thoughts, words and actions. I determined to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Here the question struck my mind, "Have you that humility, which will lead you to pray night and morning in your school?" "Yes, yes," I replied, "even though I should say no more, than, *Lord, have mercy on us;*

even though I become the ridicule and scorn of those I love. I will prostrate myself before God, and implore his mercy on perishing rebels."

The light and joy, that burst into my soul at this instant, appeared as great, unexpected and glorious, as would be the shining of the natural sun at midnight. I could scarcely persuade myself, that the dark room, where I was sitting, was not enlightened, till I reflected, that my eyes were closed. All immensity seemed filled with the fulness of God; and these words sweetly employed my thoughts:

"High on a throne his glory dwells,
An awful throne of shining bliss.
Fly through the world, O sun, and tell,
How dark thy beams, compar'd to his."

O what majesty and beauty appeared in these words. Being alone, I exclaimed aloud, *My God is come! My God is come!* I could no longer doubt of the real cause of my being left of God. My own pride and obstinacy had forced my Saviour from me. The glory and excellency of God's character appeared much greater than before. My soul was ravished with his goodness, and I could join with the Psalmist in saying, "I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave, thou hast kept me alive."

As Mrs. Smith entered the room, I observed, that I had glorious news to tell her. In surprise, she asked, who had been there to bring good news. "The Comforter," I replied. Tears of joy shone in her eyes; and she proposed to sing a hymn of praise to God. I could now heartily call on this dear friend to magnify the Lord with me, that we might exalt his name together. For I had sought him, and he had heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

I retired early to bed, that I might obtain necessary rest, in order to attend the worship of the sanctuary, and give myself to God in an everlasting cove-

nant. But the love of the Redeemer was so shed abroad in my soul, that sleep, an unwelcome guest, flew from me. Never before did I conceive of joy like this. The presence of my dearest Saviour seemed to fill my chamber with his glory; and heaven seemed realized in my soul. I felt that it was enough. My sickly frame could bear no more. I held sensible communion with the Father and with the Son and with the Holy Spirit. The glorious plan of redemption, devised in eternity, appeared with resplendent lustre. Well might the brightest choir of adoring seraphs "desire to look into these things," and cry with united voices, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

Filled with admiration of the divine character and conduct, I spent the greater part of the night without sleep, fearing to close my eyes, lest I should lose those precious exercises, which so ravished my soul. Though I was willing "to depart," yet I was ready to imagine, that it could not be infinite gain, as the arms of the dear Redeemer seemed already to uphold me; and his presence made a heaven below. The words of a certain poet appeared entirely applicable to my situation:

"I am safe, and I am happy,
While in thy dear arms I lie;
Sin nor Satan cannot hurt me,
While my Saviour is so nigh."

March 13, 1803.

Just as the day dawned, I fell into a gentle slumber. But, contrary to my expectations, I awoke in the same pleasing rapture; and found my spirits rather exhilarated by sleep. My eyes now opened on a day, long, long to be remembered by myself and many others, who were about to "subscribe with our own hands unto the Lord, and surname ourselves by the name of Israel." The important transactions of that solemn day may dwell on our minds with increasing rapture throughout the ages of eternity. Then

* 1 Pet. i. 12. Rev. v. 11, 12.

we shall have a more striking and affecting view of the transcendent grace, which has triumphed over so great unworthiness. O the boundless love and mercy, which could embrace such sin hardened, self ruined rebels, and cause us to sing of victorious grace and redeeming love.

It pleased the great Physician of soul and body to afford me such a measure of health, that I was enabled to attend meeting all day, without realizing the least inconvenience from bodily indisposition, or even recollecting that I was not in perfect health. I enjoyed a comfortable day.

I had before thought, it would be a severe cross to submit to the ordinance of baptism in a land of strangers, not only on account of the ridicule, which my young acquaintances might cast upon me, but principally on account of the reproach, which it might reflect on my beloved parents for having neglected this great and important duty in my infancy. But in this respect, as well as in various others, I found myself happily disappointed. Never did I perform an act more cheerfully, than when I received the sealing token of God's covenant love.

The afternoon was principally devoted to the administration of the sacraments. When the candidates stood forth to assent to the covenant, I verily thought that astonished angels hovered over us, to behold the affecting scene; to see the child and the gray-headed, the illiterate and the learned, rich and poor, black and white, all become one in Christ Jesus. Here stood all ranks and conditions in life, thirty in number, witnessing to the admiring spectators of the manifold power and grace of God. The house seemed filled with the glory of God; and my soul was ready to exclaim, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

The spectators seemed filled with fear; and the language of their countenances was, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

Among those, who presented themselves, to receive baptism, was a young mulatto man, who had previously excited my indignation by mixing with

others at conferences, and other meetings. I thought, that in his eagerness to hear, he sometimes took the place of his betters. I do not recollect ever feeling similar hatred and contempt toward any other created being. I could scarcely endure the thought, that he should be permitted to seek an interest in this great salvation. I even mentioned it to several, that, if some one did not check his audacity, I would take the task on myself. But here, as we were standing in the same company, on the same great business, waiting to receive the same sacred seal of the covenant, both poor and unworthy, both equally dependent, both craving the same benediction of the same glorious Benefactor, both humbly hoping to receive the same everlasting inheritance through the merits of the same bleeding Redeemer; I was led to ask my heart, whether it retained any of its former malignity toward this humble saint. But so far from it, I felt my heart glowing with christian love toward him, that I could as heartily welcome him to my Master's family, as if he had been the greatest monarch on earth. I could most cheerfully receive him, as a dear brother in Christ, and rejoice in the impartiality of God, who is no respecter of persons. Here the poor, despised, illiterate out cast was called from the high ways of sin and hedges of destruction to a saving acquaintance with that divine scheme, to which many of the wise and honourable of the earth, then present, were strangers. Thus "the Lord of hosts purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt the honourable of the earth."

After the baptism of several, I, with my sister, went to receive the precious ordinance. I then thought, that were I possessor of worlds innumerable, I could most joyfully give them all with myself into the hand of my blessed and glorious Redeemer.

Many persons present were much affected with a sense of God's goodness manifested towards my sister and me, as we presented ourselves for the reception of the baptismal ordinance. For two young, faithless strangers to be made guests at the supper of the Lamb, while many of the children of his own covenant people were left to perish in their sins, appear-

ed to be "lopping off the natural branches, that we, wild olives, might be graffed in." But O what thankfulness filled our hearts, while we were constrained to cry,

"Why were we made to hear thy voice,
And enter, while there's room;
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve, than come?

'Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forc'd us in;
Else we had still refus'd to taste,
And perish'd in our sin."

Language is insufficient to express the joy and consolation, which I felt at this memorable season. I endeavoured by searching queries to shake my hope, and see, if I was not encompassing myself about with sparks of my own kindling. But I could little less scruple my union with the Saviour, than he, who "was caught up into the third heavens, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."* My communion with God was so manifest to my soul, as to put it beyond all doubt, that I was reconciled to him. I could now say with abundant assurance, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Through every part of the solemn exercises of this day, my heart seemed expanding with love to God, and admiration of his wonderful goodness to the children of men. O the delightful employment of worshipping God in his sanctuary. A day, spent in his courts, is better than a thousand, spent, as mine have formerly been, in the pursuit of vanity. I trust, I could now sincerely say, "I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

* 2 Cor. xii.

O what a deformed picture does the review of my past life present; how sinful, how unprofitable! What years of happiness have I lost by so long rejecting the dear Immanuel. What advances might I have made in the divine life, had I but early enlisted under the banners of Christ. What services might I have instrumentally rendered to my perishing fellow mortals, instead of helping them on in their way to perdition. O let none ever think themselves too young to forsake the service of Satan for the delightful employment of serving God. Let them consider that every moment they delay repentance, they are preparing for themselves sharp pointed arrows, which will sooner or later stick fast in their anguished hearts, and perhaps pierce them through with eternal sorrows. What consummate folly is it, to reject the highest good for the momentary pleasures of sin, when reason and scripture unitedly assure us that their fruits are disappointment, pain, and shame. Should a captive in Algiers, groaning under galling chains and cruel servitude, famishing with want and hunger, separated from his dearest friends and happy country, with nothing before him but the melancholy prospect of lingering out a wretched life under the inhuman oppression of remorseless tyrants; should such a one hear the voice of freedom proclaimed, of friends and country restored with high emoluments and honours, if he would consent to quit his dreary bondage, should we not be petrified with wonder and astonishment to see him hear the glorious offer with utter indifference, slothfully procrastinating the acceptance, or perhaps spurning the proposal with disdain, preferring his loathsome prison, and hugging his clanking chains? This conduct, however strange and unnatural, would be wisdom, compared with the conduct of those, who reject the mild voice of mercy, and despise the offered Saviour with his ten thousand excellences, choosing the way of transgressors, which is hard, and the wages of sin, which is death.

LETTER TO MRS. MARTHA READ.

Bennington, March 14, 1803.

DEAREST MOTHER,

With a trembling hand and emaciated frame, I gladly write a few lines to that dear friend, who, whether in prosperity or adversity, in sickness or health, will ever be near to my anxious heart. But O my parent, I have given myself away to God in a most solemn covenant. The child, whom you have so tenderly nursed, and watched over, has sworn an eternal allegiance against you, unless you will serve my Lord and my God. O then come, come, dearest earthly friend. For his "yoke is easy, and his burden is light." I fear you depend on your morality. But alas, it is "filthy rags." If we have done, or can do any thing to merit salvation, then Christ is dead in vain. O give it all up, and bow to the righteousness of our great high Priest. O my mother, you stand on the very brink of a long eternity. Do improve every moment of your remaining life, to find your God, and to serve him, lest too late you cry, "O for a day, for a moment to repent." Believe me, my parent, my nights are sleepless on your account; because I know the terrors of the God of heaven. He has shown me, that he will punish with dreadful, fiery indignation, those who do not love him more, than every thing else. But inexpressible are the joys of those, who feel his love. To me a dungeon would be joyous and delightsome, while blest with the glorious smiles of my Saviour. Yesterday was better to me than Indies of gold. My heart bounded with joy. Ah, my mother, I have worse than lost all my life before. Do not delay a moment, dearest parent. It is delaying, that cheats thousands out of salvation. O that God in the infinitude of his mercy would visit you.

I have symptoms of a quick consumption. But, blessed be God, I will go with joy, when he calls. Farewell, my parent. Call on me, when you want human assistance; but call continually on God to grant you salvation through Jesus Christ.

Eleanor Read.

LETTER TO MRS. MARTHA READ.

Bennington, March 31, 1803.

DEAREST PARENT,

From severe illness and apparent danger, I am so far recovered as to take the care of a small number of pupils, and again to address the dearest of earthly friends. But what shall I write ? Shall I give pain to that sympathetic bosom, which has been so assiduously engaged to guard my infancy, childhood and youth from every pang and every trouble ? Painful, distressing thought. But could I calmly witness the devouring flames, consuming your dwelling, while yourself were wrapt in silent slumber in the midst of the dreadful element ? Should I not rather cast off that deference due to a parent, and vehemently cry, "Awake, awake, O sleeper, fly, fly for life ; destruction, fearful destruction is near you ?" Alas, alas ! this is but a faint, a feeble emblem of the horrid destruction, which awaits you, if you have no interest in the blood of the dear Redeemer. Examine then, my mother, search thoroughly, and, if possible, ascertain, whether that essential change has taken place in your heart, without which Christ himself declares, none shall enter the kingdom of heaven. See, what has been the main spring of all your apparent virtues ; whether it has been a propensity to external duty, arising from selfish wishes of working out your own salvation, or a love to the commands of God, depending for acceptance entirely on the merits of a bleeding Saviour. O my parent, if the latter be not the foundation of your hope and trust, your house is built upon the sand ; and when the storms of God's wrath beat upon it, the fall must be inevitably great. Think not, that I pretend to have practised those amiable virtues, which have composed your life. I have reason to blush, when I reflect on the follies of my former life, compared with the regularity of yours. Yet I cannot endure the idea, that those amiable qualities should blind your eyes, and cause you to trust in works without that true and living faith in the Son of God, which works by love, and purifies the heart. You have passed many laborious years, and are now on the decline of life.

Now I humbly beseech you with the bowels of filial love, to pass the few remaining days of this probationary state in preparing for an endless duration. Do not delay till tomorrow; for it is not yours. O prepare to bless and praise the glorious Redeemer for snatching some of your dear offspring, as brands from eternal burnings; myself, the most unworthy of all his wretched creatures, made, as I confidently trust, a subject of eternal joys. Yes, and I will take up his cross daily, and follow him. For without his love and favour life is a burden and existence a curse.

Since Charlotte left me, I despaired of meeting any of you this side the grave. But the tranquillity of my mind, occasioned by the enjoyment of the blessed Comforter, reconciled me to the idea of leaving every thing in this vain world, to go to my eternal Friend.

ELEANOR READ.

P. S. Charlotte, I am yet weak and low. I look not much like your sister Eleanor. But I am not so much alarmed for myself, as others are for me. This spring will probably determine, whether I shall tarry here, or go, as I really trust, to the bosom of my God. If my disorder prove a consumption, I shall probably return to my friends at Leicester. But to leave this subject for one, in which we both feel more interested. The good work goes on gloriously. Many in every part of the town, elderly men and women and also children, have been lately converted. Charlotte, praise God with me, that I am enabled to take up the cross, and pray morning and evening in my school.* I had no peace, till I did it; but now I enjoy religion. I long to hear how you got home, and whether you enjoy the light of God's countenance.

* This Mrs. Emerson practised in her school, as long as she continued in the employment, unless prevented by bodily indisposition.

LETTER TO MR. AND MRS. HERSEY.

Bennington, April 25, 1803.

MY FRIENDS,

I SHALL make no apology for addressing you so frequently on the all important and awfully momentous concerns of religion. For notwithstanding my former shameful neglect, I now plainly discover, that without an interest in the Saviour, life would be a burden. My beloved friends, what can I say? O that God would furnish me with language to reach your hearts. Surely death and eternal wretchedness are at your door, unless you haste for life to the ark of safety.

I tremble, dearest friends, when I view you on the brink of eternal burnings, insensible of your fearful state. Awake, I beseech you, awake to reason. Let this vain world go. It is indeed a cheat, undeserving the supreme attention of immortal beings. Do reflect. Can you carry it with you into eternity? In the tremendous hour of death, all the riches and applauses of this vain world would serve only to aggravate and torment you. Yes, you would then curse them, as your deceivers; and mourn, that you had not rather been beggars, than to have abused the blessings of a gracious God. Will not your dear children exclaim in bitter curses against you, if you never give them up to the Lord in faith? Will they not rise up in judgment against you in that awful hour of calamity? Then hasten to an angry God, and beg for mercy on your never dying souls. Devote every moment to God night and day, until the blessed Saviour whispers peace to your souls. I trust, I have an interest in his precious love; and must I be forever separated from my dearest connexions? O dreadful thought! The Saviour stands without, begging for admittance, "till his head is filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night;" wooing you to his blessed arms, crying, "Repent, return, why will ye die?" But we know not, how soon he will lift his hand, and "swear, in his wrath, that you shall never enter into his rest."

Sally, you have desired our prayers. You have them even from my little pupils in their evening

meetings. My mind is awfully impressed with fears of your approaching ruin. Something seems to whisper me, that you are near the end of your journey. I cannot sleep for anxiety. Fly, fly for refuge to the God, who made you. I beg, I conjure you, fly this moment. O make haste; for tremendous wrath hangs over you; or such terror would not haunt my mind.

Sally, I am not crazy, nor beside myself; but "speak forth the words of truth and soberness." Care not for worldly riches or honours; but O, for the durable riches in Christ Jesus. Lay by every thing else, and work for your souls, while the day lasts. Otherwise a few more days will land you, where hope can never come. What horrible sinners have we all been, with every thought in opposition to God, every action in violation of his holy commands. Tell of one good deed, which you have ever performed for the glory of God. Forgive my freedom. Your eternal all lies at stake. Agree together to seek the Lord every moment of your remaining lives. O, do not delay a single moment, lest in that moment an angry God should say, "they are joined to idols, let them alone."

Believe me, sister, from some impression on my mind, which I verily believe is from God, I am induced to pray more for you, than for every other person living. This makes me think that mercy is waiting to crown you, and that this is the last offer of salvation, which you will ever have.

I have laid this imperfect letter before my Sovereign, and prayed, that its contents may reach your stony hearts, which sickness and the near approaches of frightful death have not been able to melt.

Give my love to my dear mother. I think of you all with the tenderest love; but my most earnest prayer is, that we may all meet in heaven. If so, I am little concerned to meet you here. O warn your children to make the Judge their friend. Farewell. Remember, life is a vapour.

ELEANOR READ.

LETTER TO MRS. LUCY EMERSON.

Bennington, ——————1803.

AFFECTIONATE SISTER,

With trembling anxiety, I unsealed your welcome letter, hoping to find, that your mind was weaned from this deceitful world, and raised to glorious themes, worthy your lively imagination. You will not wonder at my most fervent wishes for what is so desirable, when I inform you, that I have enlisted under the glorious banner of King Jesus, and entered into a most solemn covenant, to spend my life, abilities and influence in his service, engaging before men and angels, and the great Judge of heaven and earth, to be for God and for none else.

With what solemn joy did I resign my eternal all into the hands of my Creator. It is impossible to describe, with what heart felt ecstasy I was enabled to say with the poet,

"I send the joys of earth away;
Away, ye tempters of the mind,
False, as the smooth deceitful sea,
And empty, as the whistling wind.

Your streams were floating me along
Down to the gulf of black despair;
And while I listen'd to your song,
Your streams had e'en convey'd me there."

Truly the streams of vanities and delusions had almost landed me beyond the mild voice of mercy, and hurled me down that dreadful precipice into the gulf, where thousands and thousands of the human family are plunged in dark and eternal despair. Can you endure the thought, my dearest sister, of being numbered among the wretched, infernal crowd? O dreadful thought! Awake, awake, I beseech you. Let not the malignant adversary deceive you, nor the dangerous snares of this world cheat you out of immortal bliss.

Have you not already discovered the treacherous nature of sublunary comforts? Certainly you have.

Then trust no more in these delusions ; but seek to withdraw your feet from the miry clay and slippery sand, and rest them on the eternal rock, Christ Jesus. There alone is peace. There alone is safety. There alone is happiness.

What farther arguments, beloved sister, shall I use, to persuade you to embrace my dearest Redeemer ? Is he not worthy our purest love and most constant veneration ! Did he not bow his sacred head on Calvary's bloody mount, to save such worms as we ? What awful vengeance then must await us, if we slight his dying love, and trample under foot his precious blood. O Lucy, hearken to the sisterly voice of her, who always tenderly loved you, who would freely submit to beggary, and, I sometimes think, to death itself, if it could be instrumental of awakening you to a sense of your deplorable situation, while an enemy to God. Could your blindness be removed, how would you tremble, and quake in view of divine wrath. It is truly a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

A long eternity is at hand. No longer procrastinate the all important concerns of another world. It is dangerous, dearest sister, to close your eyes to sleep with the dreadful wrath of Omnipotence abiding on you. What if life's slender thread should break, and sink your immortal soul in endless horror ?

I will use but one argument more, and that surely must have weight. You are now the mother of a lovely infant. Its soul must exist, as long as God exists. How unnatural, how cruel a part are you acting, while you assiduously endeavour to provide for its short journey through life, and neglect its immortal soul ; and as it were lead it down to everlasting burnings. Will not your dear child rise up in judgment against you, because you have not given it to the Lord in baptism, and because you have not offered up one prayer in faith for its immortal welfare ? O, consider, consider before it is forever too late. Sister Hersey, though encircled with the cares and

comforts of this life, is solicitously inquiring, "what she shall do to be saved." Her slumbers are disturbed with fearful apprehensions of divine vengeance; and she has sent her written request to me for the prayers of all the church, that God would have mercy on her immortal soul.* Must we all leave you, my sister? Certainly, if you will not go with us. For we prize immortal bliss far higher, than the trifling toys of this treacherous world. But can we leave a beloved sister, and not warn, admonish, beseech, and urge her to "taste and see that the Lord is good?" O what unspeakable joy do those experience, who are reconciled to the blessed Jesus.

Clarissa and Charlotte join with me in asserting, that a day, spent in the service of God, is far better, than all the pleasures, ever enjoyed by us in the vanities of youthful sports. Delay not a moment, my sister, for eternity, a dreadful eternity is at hand.

I will spread this letter before my Father, my Friend and my God. I will kneel and pray fervently that your blindness may be removed, and that some word or sentence may touch your flinty heart, and prove instrumental of turning you to God. But dreadful to reflect, if you still refuse to come, this letter will be recorded to your greater condemnation.

Love to brother and sister. Tell them, that I long to hear that they have obtained the one thing needful.

ELEANOR READ.

* There is reason to hope, that Mrs. Emerson was the principal instrument in convicting, and converting Mrs. Hersey, who obtained comfort within a few months after this letter was written.

EXTRACT

FROM MRS. EMERSON'S JOURNAL.

Being convinced that the salt water produced a beneficial effect upon my health, I concluded by divine leave to reside awhile in the pleasant town of Salem. For this purpose, I was desirous of procuring a small school, to protract my usefulness, and defray my expenses. To ascertain the probability of succeeding in this object, I went in company with my brother to Salem, and there called on the Rev. Mr. Worcester, by whom we were cordially received, and hospitably treated. I was immediately led to hope, that I should find in him a friend and patron to my undertaking. He expressed a strong solicitude to have greater attention paid to the education of youth, especially that of a religious nature; and engaged to render us all the assistance in his power.

At tea a Miss Eaton was introduced, who was a resident in that family; but in what capacity, I was unable to determine, till by her own friendly affability I learned her interesting story from herself.*

* This was a few months before Miss Eaton was married to Mr. Emerson. She was residing in Mr. Worcester's family, that she might improve in the knowledge and love of God; and also gain something of that information, which is peculiarly needful to the wife of a minister.

Mrs. Nancy Emerson, daughter of Mr. Ebenezer and Mrs. Rebekah Eaton, was born at Framingham, May 28, 1779; married Oct. 19, 1803; and died at Beverly, June 15, 1804.

The following sketch of her views and feelings upon the subject of religion she wrote about the time of her marriage, shortly before joining the church, of which she died a member.

"Almost from my infancy, my mind at times has been seriously impressed. The first strong religious exercises, which I can recollect, arose from reading of the unpardonable sin. Not knowing, in what this sin consists, I greatly feared, that I was already guilty of it; and durst not inquire into the nature of this sin, lest I should find this to be the case, or be tempted to commit it. After learning from the Bible, that what the Pharisees said of Christ was the unpar-

After the company had withdrawn, the amiable Miss Eaton invited me to retire to rest, lest the fatigue of the day should prove too much for my debilitated state of health. I accepted her kind invitation; nor shall I ever forget her gentle affability and tender concern for me, till I lose all relish for the sweets of social intercourse, and become insensible to the endearments of refined friendship. Delightful mo-

donable sin, blasphemous thoughts would continually pass through my mind. Though these did not seem to be the suggestions of my own heart, though I strove with all my might to repress them, yet they seemed to be the "sin unto death." Sleep for a time almost forsook my pillow, and my nights became seasons of horror.

Before my fears had in any considerable degree subsided, I found in some book this expression: "If you fear that you have committed the unpardonable sin, it is a sign you have not." These words after a while nearly restored my mind to its former state; though I had fears, that my terror would return. I felt impressed with the duty of being serious, and of avoiding levity and amusements, which would tend to divert my mind from serious considerations.

Thus I remained for several years. Sometimes I seemed to have powerful awakenings; but my convictions were not thorough, and I soon sunk back into stupidity.

Though I had wickedly and repeatedly resisted the Holy Spirit, and said unto God, "Depart from me;" yet it seems, that God had not yet said to me, as he did to Ephraim, "He is joined to idols, let him alone." About five years ago, he was pleased again to call up my attention, and fill my mind with pungent conviction. Reading Doddridge's discourses to the unconverted seemed to be the principal means of this.* Neglected opportunities stared me in the face. Sin appeared in all its deformity. felt so hell deserving, that I hardly desired to be pardoned; but in a fit of despair almost desired the punishment, I so justly deserved. Many times, when I attempted to pray, I could neither utter a word, nor shed a tear; but felt prostrate at the feet of Jesus, with sighs and groans imploring mercy.

After remaining in this situation a while, I began to think, that I had done all that I could do, and all that God required, and that, if I perished, it would not be my fault. But this reflection did not give me peace.

After a while my heart seemed less hard. My sins appeared infinitely great, exceeding every thing, but the efficacy of Christ's blood. On this, I believe, I rested as far as any

* She thought that almost the whole of Doddridge's "*Rise and Progress of religion in the soul*" was at different times applicable to herself.

ments ! I shall ever number them among the happiest of my life. I then fondly considered them the commencement of a permanent friendship, founded, not on the slender basis of female loquacity, but on the eternal Rock, Christ Jesus.

Though my first impressions from her appearance were rather pleasing, than otherwise, yet I considered her at a great remove from what I afterwards

one, who had so contracted a knowledge of the glorious scheme of redemption, could rest, giving up my all to God.

After this, I found myself in a happy frame of mind. I dare not pretend to say what was the particular occasion of my happiness ; but I am confident, that I felt a serene enjoyment, which I never before experienced, and which I would not have parted with for the wealth of worlds.

I soon began to think it a duty to join the church. But the more I considered the subject, the more I realized my unfitness to receive the holy supper, and the more I feared, I should dishonour Christ by making a profession, and not walking accordingly. I thought I would first ascertain, whether I could live the life of a christian, before I assumed the name. But I was more and more convinced of my unworthiness. In case of a real change of heart, I expected to feel no more conviction ; that sin would forsake me ; and that I should ever have a heart to rejoice in the divine perfections and dealings. These considerations many times almost led me to conclude, that I never had any genuine conviction ; but that all, I had experienced, was merely the work of imagination. I had many distressed hours ; but my distress was different from what I had felt before ; and seemed more like still sorrow, than the ravings of despair.

From the closest attention to myself, I found some alterations, which at times I dared to consider favourable. I could bear an injury with much more calmness, than formerly ; and I felt a kind of benevolent affection toward all mankind.

About three years ago, I was renewedly impressed. For several months, I lived secluded from the world. Religion was my theme of constant meditation. I neither dared, nor wished to devote my thoughts to any other. I seemed to have a most lively sense of the presence of God. I could clearly discover his power and goodness in every opening flower, in every drop of morning dew, and in the various beauties of the evening.

After returning to the society of the world, my impressions grew less vivid ; and I frequently reflected on my deadness with great pain. One night in particular I was greatly distressed, exceedingly fearing, that I should dishonour God ; but was comforted by a consideration of his absolute sover-

found her. Destitute of that dazzling beauty, which some may boast, she possessed a countenance peculiarly interesting, accompanied with an indescribable something in her whole demeanor, which induced me to wish for farther acquaintance.*

The night presented a happy opportunity to gratify this desire. Weak as I was, I felt too strong a desire to explore my new found treasure, to indulge a moment in drowsy forgetfulness. Totally unacquainted with her family, employment and place of nativity, it was sufficient for me, that she understood the sweet language of Canaan, which I had so recently begun to lisp. I therefore had a high relish for her instructive conversation ; and was almost ready to wish, that the night could be protracted to the age of an antediluvian.

She strongly solicited me to relate my recent experiences and God's wonderful dealings with my soul. After I had given a brief account of the loving kind-

eignty. This doctrine seemed a strong hold, has since been my greatest support, and is what I would not part with for thousands of worlds. Many times indeed it appears to be my only source of comfort.

And now what am I, that I should ever indulge a hope of eternal happiness? Sometimes I almost tremble at the thought of publicly professing Christ. I fear, that I am going in a way, which will shield me from conviction.

The feeble hope, which I sometimes enjoy, is founded principally on the following considerations ; that within five years I have had repeated awakenings, and yet do not find, that my heart grows harder ; that I have most sensibly felt the depravity of my own heart and my need of a Saviour ; that when I have met with crosses, my inmost soul has said, " It is the Lord, open not thy mouth ;" that I feel an increasing desire to become more acquainted with the character of God and a growing delight in contemplating his glorious perfections.

And now may the great Searcher of hearts preserve me from deceiving myself or others, and show me the real state of my soul, however painful, however dreadful."

* It is doubtful, whether persons in general, who were unacquainted with the rich and endearing treasures of her mind and heart, could discover any thing peculiarly interesting in her countenance, except when it was illuminated by the warm and vigorous exercises of her heart.

ness of God toward an unworthy worm, she modestly informed me, that for a considerable time she had entertained a hope of belonging to the invisible church of Christ; but that for particular reasons she had never publicly professed his name.

She informed me, that her mind had been early impressed with a sense of divine things, which had restrained her from entering with usual avidity into the circles of the young and giddy; that at times she had laboured under an almost insupportable weight of conviction for months together, almost despairing of mercy; that for four or five years, it had pleased God to remove her distressing burden, and to give her great joy and peace in believing; but that in infinite wisdom, he had seen fit to conceal from her the precise time and manner, in which this transcendently gracious work had been accomplished. This circumstance, she observed, had been a mean of creating many doubts in her mind respecting her spiritual welfare. I was suspicious, that I had unintentionally increased those difficulties by relating the wonderful light and joy that had been instantaneously ushered into my dark and despairing mind. As I then considered her, what I have had increasing evidence of her really being, a meek and lowly follower of the Lamb, I endeavoured to dispel those unprofitable doubts by relating several hopeful cases, in which the modest believers could say no more, than "Whereas I was blind, I now see." She said, she could readily adopt this language. "But my concern," continued she, "does not arise so much from a fear of perishing, as from the dread of dishonouring God by hypocritical pretensions to religion." Happy soul. That benevolent regard for the glory of God carries more evidence of the divine operation on the heart, than all the eloquence of a Cicero. I inquired, whether there were many serious youths in her native town, who by their pious walk and conversation could aid her in her journey toward heaven. "No," she replied with reiterated sighs, which manifested the sorrow of her gentle heart, "religion, vital religion, I have reason to fear, is but little known among any class of people in Framingham;

but among the young, it is considered quite unfashionable.

[Among other things, they discoursed upon the importance of improving the female mind, which gave occasion for Mrs. E. Emerson to remark in her journal, as follows.]

Let the man of real piety carefully examine the origin of that detested sentiment, which leads him to consider learning and mental improvement as undesirable in a female. Upon a thorough investigation of this important subject, will not the honest christian blush before his God for the unchristian and cruel degradation of the female mind? If the discerning and virtuous part of men would teach us to expect their esteem, only when our accuracy of thought and amiableness of conduct give us the appearance of rational beings, what a surprising reformation might be expected in the female world. The benefits accruing to the rising generation would be incalculably great. Our sons and our daughters would rise up, and call us blessed. For woman would prove herself emphatically a *help meet* for man.*

But how strangely have I digressed from the story, though not from the sentiments, of my invaluable friend. We expatiated largely on the folly of multitudes of our unthinking sex, who estimate the transcient charms of personal beauty above the substantial treasures of richly cultivated minds, capable of everlasting enlargement and increasing glory.

I inquired of her, how soon she contemplated entering the matrimonial state. "As soon," returned she, "as my friend is settled in the ministry; which will probably take place shortly." Her observations relative to her anticipated, important situation, were truly pertinent. "I often tremble," said she, "under a sense of my unworthiness to fill this difficult station. O for divine wisdom to direct me, and to enable me to be prudent and exemplary. It is an

* It must be obvious to every reader of Mrs. Emerson's writings, that she considered true religion infinitely more important and desirable, than merely intellectual accomplishments, though it is not here particularly mentioned.

object very dear to my heart to maintain becoming dignity and rational piety in the place assigned me by Providence ; and to avoid that conformity to the world, which some suppose necessary, to obtain the affections of a people. I think it is exceedingly important, that a minister's wife be religious and intelligent. In this case she may do much toward instructing the people, with whom she is connected ; and her pious example may be more promotive of Christ's interest, than the most pathetic precepts." My opinion on this interesting topic was perfectly coincident with hers. But it is to be feared, that the subject is not duly weighed by all, who are concerned in this important connexion.

We resumed our conversation in the morning ; and she kindly assured me, that she never before felt so great freedom in opening her heart to any one on so short an acquaintance ; and that nothing would be more gratifying to her than to have me reside near her.* I felt an unusual regret at leaving her ; and we agreed upon an epistolary correspondence, provided I should not return to Salem. In taking my leave, being urged by a singular impulse, I saluted my dear Miss Eaton, and bade her farewell ; but I am persuaded, I shall long remember her ; and, O that I may spend a happy eternity with her in admiring the free grace of our dearest Redeemer.†

* Alas, how soon are their bodies placed *near* to each other in the dark and silent mansions of the dead. But there is reason to hope, that their immortal spirits, enlarged, justified and made perfect, enjoy a mutual *nearness*, unspeakably glorious in the presence of the Lamb.

† In a letter to Mr. Emerson, dated July 20. 1803. Mrs. N. Emerson, then Miss Eaton, observes, " Since last evening, I have formed a friendship, which, I cannot but hope, will last forever. You may think me precipitate ; you may think me imprudent ; yet I can hardly think you would, had you the same acquaintance with this model for female imitation. Whatever I have seen of strength of mind and of exalted piety in my own sex, Miss Adams excepted, seems but a shadow to what I have discovered in Miss Read. The confidence and affection, with which she honours me, has rendered her peculiarly dear. She condescended to call me, " Sister

LETTER TO MRS. CLARISSA PIERCE.

Salem, Nov. 4, 1803.

AFFECTIONATE SISTER,

You tenderly inquire after my temporal and spiritual welfare, since my departure from your hospitable mansion. Never before in an equal length of time have I experienced such complicated fortune. My mind, as well as my body, has been the subject of torturing anxiety, and painful conflicts. On my arrival at Salem from an expensive and fatiguing journey, I repaired to the boarding house, which my friends had procured for me. Imagine, if possible, the dreariness of my situation. Surrounded by entire strangers, house rent and board very high, benches and other school materials to procure, in extremely bad health, and wholly destitute of ready money. In the midst of these calamities, I was obliged to pass a fortnight, before I could open my school; and then began with three or four pupils, without much hope of any addition till spring.

This unusual perplexity beclouded my soul with sinful distrust of the protecting care of my heavenly Father. This distrust was soon succeeded by more consistent fears with regard to my resignation to the will of God, to whom I had professedly devoted myself and all my concerns. If this was a sincere and

spirit," and my conversation the highest feast, she had enjoyed, since she left Bennington. Religion was the subject of her highest delight. She appeared to feel no reserve in laying open to me her whole heart; and I felt a great pleasure in reciprocating her confidence. I scarcely felt any delicacy in disclosing to her my present situation and pleasing prospects; and she expressed a high degree of satisfaction in my happiness. I am confident I shall never regret the time spent with Miss Read, unless her advice at the last day rise up in judgment against me. O I consider her society one of the greatest privileges I could possibly enjoy. As far as I am able to judge, she is almost just such a person, as I ardently wish, and as I think you wish, your Nancy to be. She has inspired me with a degree of enthusiasm to become, what I believe her already to be."

hearty act, whence arises this anxiety about my temporal welfare? Was my covenant with the Most High upon the condition, that if he would deal thus and thus with me, just as my carnal heart should dictate, then I would be wholly his? If so, God was not in the agreement, and I must abide the consequences of having entered into covenant with myself upon selfish principles. Neither is the Almighty obligated to grant me temporal good, having declared, that his grace is sufficient for me. Hath not God promised? And will he not perform? Did he not mercifully provide for me, even when a stranger to his great name and an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel?" And will not all things work together for my good, if I sincerely love God, and do all with a single eye to his glory?

The conviction of God's unchangeable goodness and my own exceeding unworthiness reconciled me to my destitute circumstances, and occasioned a humble resignation to the will of Him, who reigneth in righteousness, and "doeth all his pleasure."

Since that I have, as I trust, enjoyed some sweet "refreshings from the presence of the Lord." But to my dishonour I must acknowledge, that I am awfully stupid and forgetful of the blessed Redeemer, notwithstanding his transcendent love manifested to us in his sufferings and death. I have also reason to blush for my shameful doubts of the kindness of our omniscient Parent, as my school increased to the number of thirty, and many of them of the first families in town, with the apparent love of all my pupils and cordial friendship of all my acquaintances.

Thus has it pleased God, notwithstanding my black ingratitude, to dispel the clouds of darkness and fears from my temporal sky, and usher in the sun of prosperity, to illuminate my earthly prospects. And O that I may be daily inquiring, what I shall render to the Lord for all his benefits.

I have about a dozen genteel young ladies, attending to the solid branches of education; but I have continued to consider it my duty to kneel with them night and morning, to implore divine blessings on

them and myself. This I find to be the daily cross, which I am required to take up in my way to the heavenly Jerusalem. It is indeed a great, though delightful cross. I hope it will serve to keep me in the blessed valley of humiliation, and prevent in some measure the rising of that pride, to which I am naturally inclined, when respected and caressed by those the world calls great.

And now I have complied with your sisterly request, I must turn from beloved self to one, who is equally dear. The news of your bad health affects me greatly. I hope you are not to be soon snatched from the fond arms of your husband. Yet we ought all to be prepared to say, "The will of the Lord be done," under every dispensation of his providence. I hope you will find it consistent to visit me this winter with my dear brother. I think journeying may prove beneficial to your health, as it has to mine. I am still much out of health however, and can say with Job, "Wearisome nights are appointed unto me."

Please to write soon to dear sister Charlotte. Encourage her to be strong in the Lord, and to persevere to the end. Be careful, dear friend and sister, of your precious health; and let us be exceedingly diligent to "make our calling and election sure."

ELEANOR READ.

LETTER TO MR. JOHN H. READ.

Salem, Nov. 8, 1803.

BELOVED BROTHER,

My heart dilated with joy at the first glimpse of your handwriting on the back of your letter. But it is impossible to describe my feelings on perusing its melancholy contents. The news of your poor health called up every feeling of sensibility and sisterly affection; and even in my school I was forced to give a loose to those sympathising tears, which I found it impossible to restrain. Your other misfortunes are inconsiderable, when compared with the loss of health; for by the restoration of this, all other seeming difficulties can be easily removed. But your physician's fears of a settled decline exceedingly

alarm me. The awful result of that destroyer must be inevitable death. And O the solemnity of that tremendous word to a contemplative mind. To bid a long farewell to every dear connexion and tender friend ; to leave the buzy scenes of social life and joyful intercourse with men ; to separate from this long nourished structure, and consign it over to silent corruption, to be food for fattening worms and swelling insects : these are reflections sufficiently awful to shake the firm philosopher, and lead him to exclaim, " O death, thou king of terrors !"

But alas, my brother, the half is not told you. The soul, the immortal soul must exist for interminable ages. When this terraqueous globe is removed, and universal nature is remanded back to chaos, this intellectual part will be enlarging and capacitating more and more for exquisite happiness or intolerable misery ; either flourishing in unfading spring, or inhabiting that dismal region, " where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

How necessary then, when death appears to be staring us in the face, and aiming his fatal dart at our bosoms, to give all diligence to prepare to meet our God ! For there is no wisdom nor device in the grave, to which we are rapidly hastening ; and to which, dear brother, I most fervently hope the grace of God will bring you, like a shock of corn fully ripe.

ELEANOR READ.

LETTER TO MISS HANNAH ADAMS,

CONCERNING MRS. NANCY EMERSON.

Salem, Oct. 28, 1804.

ESTIMABLE FRIEND,

I MUCH regret, that my unusual hurry of business has so long prevented my answering your truly acceptable letter. But the first moments of leisure I cheerfully devote to a subject, which will ever be dear to our hearts, the excellences of that dear, amiable friend, whose immortal bliss can neither be increased, nor diminished by our applauses or detractions.

I have made you acquainted with my peculiar attachment to her from our first endearing interview. Since that time, I have considered her that inestimable jewel, which I had long sought, a friend, possessing all those perfections, which you so justly and so beautifully described in your delineation of her character.* She was truly a valuable treasure, lent as a pattern for us to imitate, and then recalled to her heavenly Owner.

But to proceed according to my engagement. I shall take my journals, which were written at the time of her death, relying on your candour to cover all the errors.

June 15, 1804. Last night I was unusually perplexed in my dream; fancied myself at Beverly, greatly fatigued with walking, and faint for want of refreshment. I inquired solicitously for the house of Mr. Burley, where my dear friend Mrs. Emerson resided; but could not see her, though the house was shown me.

I take but little notice of dreams. But my extreme anxiety through the night induced me to relate this dream to my sister. On sending to Mrs. Shillaber to visit Mrs. Emerson with me, I was made to realize the same distress by information, that my lovely friend had been called to exchange worlds the

* In a letter to Mrs. Eleanor Emerson, then Miss Read, dated July 25, 1804, Miss Adams observes; "I am pleased to find, that you duly appreciate the worth of our dear departed friend, Mrs. Emerson. The sweetness of her manners and the excellence of her character conciliated the affection of all, who had the happiness of her acquaintance. But she was so perfectly modest and unassuming, that the height of her intellectual and religious attainments could be known only to her intimate friends."

In a letter to a friend, dated June 27, 1804, Miss Adams writes concerning Mrs. N. Emerson thus, "I never felt so strong an affection for any other person upon so short an acquaintance. Her image is indelibly fixed in my mind. I never again expect to find such a happy union of strength of intellect, mental cultivation, sincerity of heart, exquisite sensibility, true feminine delicacy and unassuming modesty; and, in short, of all the virtues and graces, sublimed by undissembled piety."

night before.* I felt a severe disappointment, that I could no longer enjoy her engaging society ; but was soon brought to reflect upon my selfish sorrow. Notwithstanding the incalculable loss, which her affectionate partner and other intimate acquaintances had sustained, I trust, I was led to rejoice, that it was her infinite gain.

I immediately reviewed my last conversation with her, which happily I had committed to paper ; and ah, what piety, what resignation was manifested in every word.

On making mention of her debilitated state of health, I asked her, whether she could still rejoice in the government of God. "O yes," she calmly replied, "I trust, I can rejoice more in view of God's being glorified in the disposal of myself and all others according to his infinite wisdom, than in the hope of my own salvation. I have never experienced those high exultations of joy, that some experience, but trust, I have enjoyed great peace and quiet in feeling myself in the hand of a Being, infinitely wise and good, whose honour and glory are of infinitely greater consequence, than every thing else."

I observed, that on her entering on the matrimonial state, being sensible of her thirst for information and opportunities for gaining it, I had considered her situation peculiarly happifying ; but that God had seen fit to disappoint her expectations, as she had since enjoyed but very little health. "Truly," said she, "we have made great allotments in these respects, which God for wise purposes has seen fit to disappoint.† But I have reason to hope, that I have been in a far better school, and that I have been learning a better lesson, than any human being can teach, cor-

* This information was not perfectly correct, as she died about five o'clock the preceding afternoon.

† She lived eight months after marriage, and in the forepart of that time she was enabled to pay some attention to study. Besides considerable reading upon religious subjects, she paid some attention to algebra, and studied about two thirds of Enfield's Institutes of Natural Philosophy, having

dial submission to the will of God, and patience under his afflictive dispensations. O how have the goodness and mercy of God been manifested to me in turning the hearts of all to befriend me. O, it is nothing to endure sickness, when blest with such tender friends and an indulgent God." "Then you can attest the loving kindness of God," said I. "Yes, O yes," said she with a heavenly smile, "He is equally good, as when I enjoyed health with all the variety of its attendant blessings." Happy, happy soul! Who would not wish to die the death of the righteous, and that his latter end might be like this? She spoke in

previously gained a good knowledge of Euclid's Elements of Geometry.

Her bereaved husband is now convinced, that her education was not conducted upon the most judicious plan. While he entertains the same opinion of the capacity of females to understand every thing, that man can understand, and also of the importance of improving their minds, he thinks differently with regard to the best method of improving them. While he thinks that great advantages may result from their pursuing mathematical and philosophical studies, he is convinced that much greater advantages may result from their pursuing studies of a different nature. He is fully of opinion, that, if females wish to do the greatest possible good, they must not attempt to know every thing; but content themselves to limit their attention to such pursuits, as are of the greatest moral and practical importance. Without attempting to point out a complete course of female employments, he would suggest it as his opinion, that the leisure hours, which females can gain from domestic pursuits, may be profitably spent in secret devotion, in religious conversation, in social worship, in diligently reading the scriptures through in course every year, in selecting and committing to memory several hundreds of the most striking passages of scripture, which may appear of the highest doctrinal and practical importance, in reading the writings of Baxter, Flavel, Bunyan, Burkitt, Henry, Saurin, Mason, Watts, Guyse, Doddridge, J. Edwards, Davies, Hopkins, John Newton, John Brown, Emmons, More, Fuller, Scott, Burder, &c. &c. in reading Young's Night Thoughts, and a few of the best histories; that, in these ways, they may spend their time to much greater advantage, than in studying geometry, algebra, or natural philosophy.

It is hoped that an earnest desire to counteract the injurious tendency of former errors will be considered a sufficient apology for the nature and length of this note.

terms of the liveliest gratitude of the assiduous attention of the family, with whom she resided, as well as of many of her female friends, who had taken the care of procuring her furniture. She observed, that a sense of her unworthiness of such favours at times almost overcame her. But my heart and eyes are too full to dwell any longer on the melancholy theme. What a loss have I sustained in her premature exit. But the Lord gave, and it is he, that hath taken away; and blessed be his name.

I attended the funeral of my worthy friend, and heard an excellent sermon, delivered on the occasion, by the Rev. Mr. Smith of Hollis, from Rev. 22. 12. "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." He beautifully delineated the character of the amiable deceased; and in terms the most pathetic exhorted all to follow her as far as Jesus had been her pattern. His address to her bereaved partner was truly pertinent; yet my treacherous memory will retain but little of it. "Imagine not, dear brother," said he, "that your endeavours to render your departed friend a peculiarly intelligent, instructive, and pious companion are lost. But let it be a source of lasting consolation to you, that God has made you instrumental of capacitating her immortal soul for more enlarged degrees of blessedness and glory. For scripture assures us, that some shall shine, as the brightness of the firmament, and others as the stars forever and ever."

Let us then, my dear Miss Adams, lose no time in fruitless lamentations for her, who died in the Lord, and has, as we humbly trust, "come off conqueror through him that loved her." Let us endeavour by divine assistance to copy her bright example of unaffected piety; and, as far as our influence may extend, endeavour to promote the interest of our Lord and Saviour.

I beg an interest in your addresses at the throne of grace. May God grant you assistance in all your laborious studies, and make you a mean of doing still

greater good to a "world lying in wickedness." This is indeed an object worth living for.

I shall make no apology for the length of my letter, as you kindly assured me that every circumstance relative to Mrs. Emerson would be highly interesting to you.

That the best of Heaven's blessings may ever rest upon you, is the fervent wish of your much obliged and grateful friend,

ELEANOR READ.

In the summer of 1805, Mrs. Emerson was married, and removed to Beverly. Her health had been unusually poor for months before marriage, having been brought to the borders of the grave the preceding winter. After marriage she gradually gained strength for several months.

In July, 1806, she had the joy to embrace a living child. This joy was heightened by the consideration, that her child was a daughter, and would bear the name of her ever honoured friend and predecessor, NANCY EMERSON.

During the following autumn, her health was better, than she had enjoyed for several years before; and she appeared to rejoice in her child, in her friends, and above all in her God.

After marriage she wrote many endearing letters to her connexions and friends;* and found much more time for reading, than she had done for many years before. This she diligently improved.

She often expressed her lively sense of gratitude for the many favours, which she had received from her friends at Beverly, and other places, where she had resided.

* Some of these letters and also some others previously written, not here published, are omitted for want of room; as the work already contains 24 pages more, than was promised to subscribers. Probably there are some of her letters in the hands of friends living at a distance, which, if they could have been seasonably procured, would have been inserted to the exclusion of some things here published.

In the winter preceding her death, she wrote the Biographical Sketch of Mrs. Pickard and Mrs. Wallis, published in the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, vol. 5, in the number for Jan. 1808, page 314. Probably this was almost the only composition she ever wrote, expecting to have it published. Whether it is superior to her more hasty productions, the reader may judge. Those, who were well acquainted with Mrs. Pickard and Mrs. Wallis, are of opinion, that these miniature pictures are very exact likenesses, without the least degree of complimentary colouring.

Perhaps the reader will have the curiosity to turn to a few lines of her poetry, published in the Mass. Miss. Mag. vol. 1. in the number for Feb. 1804, page 397, entitled, "*Lines composed by the eldest of two sisters*," &c. This, though more correct than some of her printed poetry, is not thought to be the best of her poetic productions. As she appeared to have a natural turn for poetry, it is to be regretted that she did not improve this talent by means of reading and critical instruction.

About the first of Nov. 1807, having more compassion for others than for herself, she went out in the evening to visit the sick, and took a violent cold. Of this, as she supposed, she never wholly recovered. It was probably a mean of hastening her dissolution. She however so far recoverd, as to be at times considerably comfortable.

Early in the spring of 1808, feeling desirous of doing all the good in her power, and retaining a singular fondness for her old employment, she took a few young ladies to instruct in the useful branches of learning. It is probable, however, that this little school was injurious to her health, and proved another mean of soon depriving her connexions and friends of her endearing society; though she was not sensible that she was injuring her health at the time. Though compassed with many infirmities, and excruciated with complicated pains from day to day, she did not appear unusually apprehensive of danger.

Having been repeatedly raised from sickness and from symptoms much more alarming, it is not strange, that she hoped for better health. Indeed her friends had greater hopes of this than fears of the contrary.

In May she with great reluctance dismissed her little school, that had become exceedingly dear to her, in order to journey for her health ; hoping to return in a few weeks, and pour further instructions into their eager minds.

She went to Leicester, and then to Enfield in Connecticut. Having returned to Leicester, she seemed for a few days to be rapidly gaining, to the encouragement and unspeakable joy of her connexions. But just as she was about returning to Beverly, she was taken with raising blood, and again reduced. After an absence of about six weeks, she returned home very little, if any better, than when she went away.

As she had previously received much benefit from long journies, her friends upon seeing her return no better, felt great alarms, much greater than she felt herself, and greater than they thought it expedient to express to her.

As she was strongly desirous of trying a second and longer journey, her friends consented. Her husband and other friends were rather desirous of her going ; supposing that, though there was scarcely a ray of hope, that she would ever be any better, while continuing at home, a long journey *might* prove instrumental of repairing her health, and preserving her life a few years longer. Others, supposing that she could live but a short time, and that all remedies would prove ineffectual, were desirous that she should spend her few remaining days in Beverly, where she had the greatest number of friends. But as it was her wish to go, very little was said to the contrary.

It was her intention to go to Leicester, and then to visit her connexions in the northern parts of Vermont. Accordingly on the twenty second of August

she left Beverly, to see it no more. Her husband was about equally divided between hope and fear with regard to her surviving her journey.

Her journey to Leicester was much more fatiguing, than had been anticipated. On the third day after she sat out, having with great difficulty ridden about ten miles, she could proceed no farther ; but found it necessary to take her bed and call a physician. He was of opinion, that she was far gone in a consumption ; that she might hope for a little revival ; but could not continue long. So it proved. His medicine operated so favourably, that the next morning she appeared considerably better, than she had either of the two preceding. That day she rode more than 20 miles, and arrived at Leicester. But her eagerness to reach that place had carried her much beyond her strength. Indeed her spirits were so much raised, that she and her husband were greatly deceived with regard to her real strength.*

Immediately after she arrived at Leicester, she took her bed ; to which she was almost wholly confined for several days. She gradually gained strength, so that in a little more than a fortnight she was able to walk a few steps and to ride two miles. Though she had entirely given up the thought of pursuing her journey to Vermont, she began to entertain some hope of again visiting her Beverly friends, whom she longed to see once more in the land of the living.

She continued gaining till about the middle of September, when she, as well as some of her friends, had strong expectation, that she would soon be able to return to Beverly, and some faint hope, that she might live a few years longer. But soon alas, those fond endearing hopes were blasted. She immediately began to decline, and continued sinking by stages, which succeeded each other at shorter and shorter intervals, until her death ; which took place Nov. 7, at a quarter before three o'clock in the afternoon.

* It is earnestly recommended to consumptive persons, that they be exceedingly cautious not to go beyond their strength, when journeying for health. Gen. 33. 13.

The pious reader may wish to be informed with what views and feelings she languished and expired. God only knows the heart. It is not for us in this world to gain absolute certainty with regard to these things. Mrs. Emerson died in such a manner, as to afford unspeakable consolation to her weeping friends ; and probably gave as much evidence of dying in the Lord, as she had ever given of living in the Lord.

For more than a year before her death, her mind had been more clouded with doubts and fears respecting herself, than for any previous equal time since she professed religion. During the forepart of her last sickness at Leicester, her doubts increased, till she appeared sunk in almost total despair. She discovered so many imperfections in her past life, and so much sin in her heart, that it appeared to her impossible, that she could have ever been a real christian. She often spoke of the astonishment, that would fill the minds of her christian friends, to see her at the left hand at the judgment day. It is probable, that language cannot fully express the deep sense of sin, the pungent conviction, with which her mind was filled, and almost overwhelmed, for several weeks. Much, very much, was said to her, and many prayers were offered in her presence, by ministers and christian friends. A considerable part of the New Testament was read to her, and some parts many times over, besides frequent passages from the Old Testament, and from books uninspired, that appeared to apply to her case. But nothing afforded her the least gleam of hope, that there could be any mercy for such a wretch, as she viewed herself. Not that she considered her sins too great to be forgiven ; but she seemed fully fixed in the opinion, that all her religion had been hypocrisy ; that she never had, nor should have any true repentance. She sometimes seemed rather grieved, that others should attempt to convince her, that she was a christian, or even think her such. In a letter to a friend, which she dictated near the last of September, being unable

to write, her feelings are expressed thus; "You must be in some measure sensible of my shameful ingratitude to God for many months past; of which I am now reaping the bitter fruits. My mind is clouded with darkness, and filled with sorrow. I hope, my dear friend, it will be a warning to you, to live devoted to God. A death bed is a dreadful place to prepare to meet the king of terrors." But she manifested nothing of that enmity, which she had at Bennington, before joining the church. She did not appear disposed to complain of God, but of herself. She sometimes reproved her husband, because he had not more closely examined her, and shown her, that she was a hypocrite.

By the following extracts from letters, written by her husband, to a friend in Beverly, the reader may have some idea of the state of her mind through October. "Oct. 4. She seems to be apprehensive, that her change is near at hand. But she does not appear greatly moved at the near prospect of the world of spirits. Within three or four days her distress of mind appears to have almost wholly subsided. I hope and trust, God has been graciously pleased to appear for her relief; though she has not those clear views of divine things and high exercises of joy, which she desires. For these, let our daily and fervent petitions ascend to Him, who heareth prayer. I never knew any other person, who appeared to have so deep a sense of unworthiness and guilt." "Oct. 6. Yesterday and to day Mrs. Emerson has been a little more comfortable, though still very low. Almost all her distress of mind seems to have left her. I trust she has been comforted by the Holy Comforter. She seems to be constantly longing for clearer manifestations." "Oct. 19. I hope she enjoys some true religious comfort from day to day; but appears to be exceeding jealous of her own heart, I trust, with a godly jealousy." "Oct. 29. Her symptoms appear rather more unfavourable. She thinks that her departure cannot be many days distant. Her mind appears to be in a good measure tranquil. Her

meditations, when she is able to meditate, appear to be almost wholly upon objects, which have immediate relation to death, judgment and eternity."

In the latter part of Oct. she parted with her child, without the least expectation of again meeting on earth. The scene was solemn and affecting. She was just able to sit up, and embrace her prattling babe. The tender mother manifested all that affection, fortitude, resignation, and holy joy, that her friends could wish to witness, while she audibly commended her only child to the care and grace of her only Saviour.

About the first of November, as Mrs. Hersey was watching with her, Mrs. Emerson addressed her in nearly the following words, "Sister, is my sensibility blunted, or is it on account of resignation to the will of Heaven, that I feel no more distressed at the thought of parting with my dear friends? I have one of the kindest and best of husbands, an endearing child, a tender mother, dear brothers and sisters, and many, very many dear friends. A few weeks ago the thought of parting with them would have been insupportable. But now I feel all that weanedness from the world, that I can desire. I can trust all my friends in the hand of God, who can do more for them, than I can ask, or think." She then addressed the Redeemer, "Have I not, O blessed Jesus, given up myself, my friends and my all into thy faithful hand? O for clearer views of thy character. O for the light of thy countenance, to shine more clearly into my soul. O for those animating prospects, which I once enjoyed, when I could look on this flesh, and see it pine and decay with heartfelt satisfaction." Seeing Mrs. Hersey in tears, she said, "Dear sister, I love you tenderly. We have always lived in friendship. Pray earnestly to God, that we may meet in the blissful mansions above, to part no more; that we may join in singing praises to God and the Lamb forever and ever. Pray for my dear child, and for our beloved mother. O that dear woman; what a tender mother she has been to us all. Pray that she may

be prepared to spend eternity in heaven. Pray for yourself, for your dear husband and children. Attend to their morals. Remember, they have precious souls, for which you are in a sense accountable. Write to our dear sisters. Tell them to flee from the wrath to come, and make the Judge their friend before it is too late. Tell them to make religion the business of their lives. Tell Lucy from me, that with my dying breath I beseech her to prepare for death, judgment and eternity. Tell her to flee now to the ark of safety, before the things, that belong to her eternal peace, be hid forever from her eyes. O that I could see that dear brother and sisters, that I might warn them to forsake their sins, and lay hold on eternal life."*

On Friday afternoon, Nov. 4, she was taken much worse, and failed more in a few hours, than she had for several days before. But as the outward man decayed, the inner man appeared to gain strength and vigour. Her views of spiritual things on that day were more clear and joyous, than they had been for any other preceding day, since the commencement of her sickness.

On Saturday, Nov. 5, she was exceedingly comforted and delighted by means of the conversation and prayer of Dr. Austin of Worcester.

The night following she repeatedly warned Mrs. Hersey, who was watching with her, to prepare to die. "Sally," said she, "I entreat you to be watchful and prayerful. Set good examples before your children. Watch over them. Be much in prayer for them. Entreat your husband to pray with and for them." After slumbering a few moments, she said, "Dear sister, I love you sincerely. How good has God been to me in giving me such kind and tender friends. O I long to see my dear Beverly friends once more. That dear Mrs. Ellingwood I want to see, more than I can describe. I want to

* Referring probably to a brother and three sisters in Vermont.

warn and entreat her to take care of her immortal soul."* She was then for some time engaged in prayer for her child and her friends. After that she was in very great bodily distress through the night, often repeating, "Dear Jesus, have I not given myself to thee? Am I not thine, thou Lamb of God?"

In the course of the night, she said, "O Sally, pray for that dear woman, that best, that tenderest of mothers. Her days are far spent. She has but a little while to stay with you. I greatly fear that my death will be the means of hastening hers. Beg of her, when I am no more, not to mourn for me. Tell her that it is my ardent request, that she would not reflect on any thing, which might have been done better for me. She has done all she could; and the rest of my friends have done every thing in their power for me. It is all as God in his goodness saw best it should be. The greatest kindness you can now do me is not to reflect on any thing, that is past, as it respects me; but mourn, that we have not spent our time, when together, more upon the things, that belong to our eternal peace. I have often regretted, that we, who profess to know the Lord, have lived no more, as becometh christians. I have been shamefully stupid. Much, very much of my precious time has gone to waste. I beg of you not to indulge in foolish jesting and unprofitable conversation. This you, as well as I, are too much addicted to. For this, I have mourned, and, I trust, repented upon this bed of sickness. O that you may never go astray, as your unworthy sister has. But I humbly trust, that God has pardoned my enormous sins, and will take me to himself. My bodily distress is very great; but God is able to give me patience to endure it."

On Sabbath morning, November 6, she was very low, and her friends were apprehensive, that she would not live more than two or three hours. She continued much the same till evening, when she ap-

* Mrs. Ellingwood lived in the house with Mrs. Emerson at Beverly.

peared considerably revived. Some of the neighbours called in to see her, and also Mr. Moore, minister of the place. In a letter to a friend, Mr. Moore observes, "You requested me to mention what I recollected of Mrs. Emerson's conversation on the evening previous to her death. The following are the observations of hers most worthy of notice. "I am now "dying; and how short does life appear, when it is "finished. O it is a vapour, a bubble. How soon "does it vanish; how soon broken. I am not sure I "am going to heaven; but of this I am sure, that I "have no hope but in Christ. He is the only founda-"tion; and if I am not deceived, I have built upon "him. O how great is his love, how glorious is his "person." In the course of the evening, she was repeatedly engaged in prayer for the presence and support of God. To all present she observed, that there is no salvation but in Christ, and that he is the way and the truth and the life. She inquired of her brother and several who were present, how death appeared to them; and again urged the importance of an interest in Christ, and of being prepared without delay. To Capt. Trask, with whose first wife she had been particularly acquainted, she spake with tenderness, and requested him to train up his two daughters, left him by his first wife, in the fear of God. With much feeling she expressed her gratitude to her friends for their kindness and attention to her during her sickness, and her hope, that God would reward them. To her brother Hersey she spoke with much feeling and tenderness, and requested him to train up his children for God. During the evening she was apprehensive that her end was nigh, and had no expectation of seeing the light of another day. Her remarks and admonitions were such, as we might expect from a dying christian, and were expressive of a tender concern for the eternal welfare of those around her.

Her soul appeared to be much refreshed by the conversation of Mr. Moore. As he went to take his leave, she took his hand and said, Farewell, my dear

friend; God grant that we may meet in heaven. Give my love to dear Mrs. Moore.

That night she said very little.

The next morning, Nov. 7, about 7 o'clock she said she discovered the hand of death upon her, that she felt the indescribable shock a few moments before. She soon inquired the time of day, called her friends around her, admonished them of their danger, and exhorted them to view the things of this world as vain and transitory, and to consider that there was but a step between them and death.

On that memorable day she was enabled to converse much. At times she seemed wonderfully revived and strengthened. For the last eight hours of her life, she was probably engaged in speaking more than a quarter part of her time. She spoke more moderately than usual, and so audibly, that every person in the room could easily hear every word. She spoke with a tenderness, solemnity, earnestness and awful emphasis, which seemed calculated to penetrate a heart of stone. It was the eloquence of christian triumph and dying love; an eloquence, which perhaps cannot be conceived, except by the deeply affected spectators of that or of similar scenes.

A small part only of what she said can be presented to the reader. Some things however were written down at the time in her own words, and are published with scarcely any variation. These may be considered as a specimen of the whole. If any reader should not find them quite so striking, as he expects, he may remember, that the most powerful eloquence generally consists much more in the manner than in the matter.

MRS. EMERSON'S LAST WORDS.

"Am I deceived? Or is that Jesus mine;* that King of kings and Lord of lords?—O, my friends, trust not in worldly honours, or in man's applause. What are they worth? Ten thousand worlds cannot be worth, what Jesus is to me."

From 9 o'clock to half after 10.

"Dear Brother,† we have passed the playful hours of childhood together. We have loved each other, and still most tenderly love. But view the hour of separation. A few moments and my soul must depart. Do, my dear brother, view these earthly pleasures as vanity. Look back on life, and see how short what's past. Look at your present age, and think how short the rest. O may you and your dear partner seek for an interest in Christ. O seek for a better home. All that loveliness; what is it, if at last she be not found in Christ, and her soul lie down in sorrow? Dear sister Mary,‡ if you do not attend to these things after all your calls and warnings, your condemnation will be awfully, dreadfully aggravated. Will you not both resolve to make the service of God your whole business? O that I might meet you in the bright realms of bliss. Farewell."

"My dear Mother, my dear and honoured Mother, let me entreat you to trust in God. Lean upon the arms of Jesus. Devote your all to his service—O, glorious prince of light, appear for her; be her support in life; be thou her God; O save her precious soul. My dearest mother, the greatest kindness you can do for me, is to follow my example, as far as I have followed Christ; and to depart from it, where I

* Her soul was filled with the thoughts of Jesus; and she seemed to think that others knew her thoughts; as if she had said, "or is that Jesus mine—*that Jesus*, upon whom I have been meditating with such intense delight?"

† Mr. John H. Read.

‡ Wife of Mr. Read.

have departed from him. Go to my dear husband for religious instruction. O may you be prepared for this solemn hour. Farewell, my tender parent."

"My dear and affectionate husband, give my renewed love to my dear Beverly friends. Tell them, I have only to regret, that I have not devoted myself wholly to the service of God. Do remember our dear little daughter. O that she might be of the household of faith. Glorious Immanuel, Lamb of God, take her to thine arms. Be thou her guide, her friend, her Saviour. Pray for her, my husband. Pray for sister Paulina. Admonish her. Tell her in my name of the importance of an interest in Christ, and of being ready for this awful scene."

At a little after 11, she inquired the time of day. She then conversed for some time with her husband concerning the resurrection of the dead and the second coming of Christ. She often breathed forth ejaculations to Heaven, and requested her husband to pray with her.

At half after 11, supposing herself dying, she said, "Raise me up. The room is dark as night. I cannot see. Farewell, my dear friends——Why do you weep? Weep not for me. Prepare to follow me. You all must shortly come to this. O Jesus, receive my departing spirit. O thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, hast thou not raised my sinking soul from the gates of destruction? Hast thou not spoken peace to my wandering soul? O blessed Jesus, I do believe in thee, thou only Saviour of lost mankind. Although I have greatly departed from thee, yet call home the wanderer; receive me to thyself, thou holy Son of God."

A little before 12, her sight was in some measure restored. She requested her husband to tell her something respecting heaven. He spoke upon the subject about twenty minutes. She appeared exceedingly delighted with the glorious prospect, and exclaimed, "It seems too much, that this sinful soul should be society for angels. Yet I believe, I trust, it

will. O tell our sisters,* and not them only, let us not be partial, TELL THE WORLD OF THE LOVE OF JESUS. Sister Charlotte, I trust you have drunk deep of it, and dear sister Hersey. If you have not, let me conjure you to give yourselves no rest, till the dear Redeemer speaks peace to your souls. Millions of worlds are not worth, what I experience in this trying moment. O how much I think of Paulina, and her precious soul; how much I wish she was here."

At 1 o'clock she said, "Dear brother Hersey, are you prepared to meet your God? Do you discharge the high obligations, that devolve on you? You have immortal souls committed to your charge. O pray for them; pray with them. Never forget the resolution of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Remember, that time is short. We must all be judged according to our works. I hope God has forgiven my mountains and mountains of sins. Let not that fear of man, which bringeth a snare, keep you from duty. You have reason to hope, that your wife has chosen Mary's better part. Can you bear the thought of being forever separated from her?"

She then addressed some of his children, who were present. "Children, God will execute judgment upon you, if you do not serve him. Little children, you have souls to be saved or lost." She then said, "I cannot describe the agony, which I feel.

"Jesus, to thy dear faithful hand
My naked soul I trust;
And my flesh waits at thy command,
To sink into the dust;
And my flesh waits at thy command,
To sink into the dust,
To sink into the dust."

Not far from this time she observed, "I can adopt the words of my predecessor, *My Redeemer liveth.*"†

* Referring to the sisters of the church at Beverly, of which she was a member.

† The last words of Mrs. Nancy Emerson were, "My Redeemer liveth, and I shall live with him."

At a quarter after 2 she said, "Jesus Christ is mine, and I am his forever and ever." These were her concluding words. She probably retained her reason, till the last. At a quarter before 3, the wished for moment arrived; and her immortal spirit took its flight.

The funeral was attended at the meeting house on the ensuing Thursday, Nov. 10. A solemn and affecting sermon was preached upon the occasion to a very attentive audience, by the Rev. Mr. Moore, from Revelation 14. 13. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

Her body was deposited in a tomb for a few hours; and then, agreeably to what she had requested, it was conveyed to Beverly, and laid by the side of her predecessor's, whose friendship she had so highly prized, whose death she had so deeply deplored, whose memory she had so greatly honoured.

THE END.